

READER

At Young American Nick Jirasek will paint it black.

The upcoming barstaurant from Leisure Activities will serve up life, wellness, freshness, and death.

By MIKE SULA

Removal on display: the Field Museum's Native North American Hall asks who it represents.

Old Hollywood visits Pilsen in Ashley Cooper's Filmfront series American Ego.

Playing in the house of worship: a secular concert comes to Rockefeller Memorial Chapel.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

WE TEND TO THINK ABOUT CULTURE in America these days as consumable products or ticketed events, and so the “cultural coverage” most media outlets offer is reduced to binary reviews: should one or should one not pay hard-earned money for the product or event in question? (“When I hear the word ‘culture’ I take out my checkbook,” visual artist Barbara Kruger posed in the 1980s.) Yet actual culture today—the musical, gustatory, aesthetic, movement-based, and intellectual pursuits of humans—is in greater flux than even the stock market. The #MeToo movement would seem to be a positive change for women, for example, although I can understand how it may be less delightful for rapists. ICE raids are profoundly negative, not just for the individuals whose lives are violently disrupted, but for their families and communities who must live every day with a warranted fear of attack and expulsion. Yet raids continue, presumably because the fears around migration that they generate benefits those in comfort.

The mealtime conversations that result in and from these movements and the backlashes against them—and, indeed, the latest flick at the multiplex—these all constitute our culture. In this way we can see that our culture is a direct reflection of politics. Here in Chicago we are being offered a nearly unprecedented opportunity to vastly change our local culture in one fell swoop: with votes on mayoral and aldermanic elections, in city clerk and treasurer races, and on a range of referenda.

The *Reader* is known as a cultural paper. In service to that ongoing

agenda, we’re embarking on a project to ask you what kind of culture you want in 2019. We also want to offer you information about who might be best to ensure it comes about once all the runoff elections are completed. We’re kicking this quest off tonight at a Public Newsroom event with City Bureau. We’ll be planning our election—and cultural—coverage based on the kind of city you tell us you want to live in. (If you didn’t sign up, don’t worry—we hope to have plenty more ways to gather your input in the coming months.)

Regrettably, our last issue featured new media innovator Sonia Sheridan on our cover without mentioning her name. An article incorrectly stated that Michael Beyer is suing Chicago Public Schools in conjunction with the Ogden local school council. Only some members of the LSC are joining the suit. In addition, an ingredient in a Rocio Vargas dish was incorrectly identified in our last issue; it is cannabutter. And we misprinted “Lincoln Yards” in the last issue as well.

Joravsky sets the tone for our mayoral coverage with a petition-ing-process explainer in this issue, and we’ve got a peek at some new cultural discussions at the Field Museum. Comics reporter Anya Davidson is back to draw out the political themes in a recent discussion of the 1983 Lizzie Borden film *Born in Flames*, and Mike Sula’s restaurant preview looks at how one eatery is coping with life—and death—as the president conspires to Make America Great Again.

Want to tell us more about the kind of culture you want in Chicago? See you tonight. Or, we hope, very soon.—**ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE**

COMICS FEATURE

Toppling the patriarchy

A 1983 science fiction film fuels ongoing discussion on racial and gender justice

BY ANYA DAVIDSON 8



CULTURE FEATURE

How do you display an absence?

The Field Museum’s Native North American Hall is starting to ask who it represents

BY JOSH RIOS 10



FILM FEATURE

Exploring the American Ego

Ashley Cooper’s film series at Filmfront brings Old Hollywood to Pilsen

BY DMITRY SAMAROV 23

MUSIC FEATURE

Playing in a house of worship

Chicago-born label Kranky and LA-based promoter Ambient Church put the spirituality of musical performance on display

BY JORDAN REYES 26

IN THIS ISSUE

CITY LIFE

04 Shop Window *Bronzeville store Agriculture sows classic clothing lines.*

NEWS & POLITICS

06 Joravsky | Politics *Few mayoral candidates can survive a petition challenge.*

07 Isaacs | On Culture *The part-time faculty union at Columbia College enters a troubling period.*

FOOD & DRINK

15 Restaurant Review *Young Americans in Logan Square will feature fresh foods that make you ponder death.*

ARTS & CULTURE

17 Theater *A new book explores unique Hull-House inspired Chicago theater practices.*

18 Theater *The Neo-Futurists have a whole new show—that’s both familiar and exhilarating.*

18 Dance *The Joffrey’s Nutcracker fails to inspire in its third season.*

20 Puppetry *The inventiveness of puppet cabaret Nasty, Brutish & Short is on full display at Links Hall next week.*

20 Theater *A long-lost French opera; a cross-cultural sitcom; The Woman in Black, and more*

22 Book Swap *Our readers explore BBQ, pie, and politics.*

MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

30 Shows of note *Playing this week: The Internet, Forever Deaf Fest, Xibalba Itzaes, and more great shows*

33 Secret History of Chicago Music *Folk genius Dwain Story died a legend to the few who remember his music.*

CLASSIFIEDS

36 Jobs

36 Apartments & Spaces

36 Marketplace

37 Savage Love *Mostly straight men seek advice on orgasms and escorts.*

38 Early Warnings *Neko Case, Deerhunter, Gang of Four, Judas Priest and more upcoming shows*

38 Gossip Wolf *Akasha’s new record addresses immigration and discrimination; local collective FeelTrip plans to open a record store; and producer Jeremiah Meece drops a solo album.*



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SHOP WINDOW

Garment growers

Agriculture offers a crop of style in the heart of Bronzeville.

"I WATCHED MY MOM make clothes for the guys in the neighborhood and I could see the confidence it gave to them. I saw the way they acted when they dressed well," says Milton Latrell, 38, about the transformative power of a great outfit. More than a decade ago, along with childhood friend Christopher Brackenridge, 39, he founded Agriculture, a shop nestled in a once bustling stretch of 43rd Street in Bronzeville. "Right here there used to be a series of black-owned businesses up and down the street," says Latrell, who grew up in one of the neighborhood projects—and like Brackenridge, learned how to sew at home. Inspired by



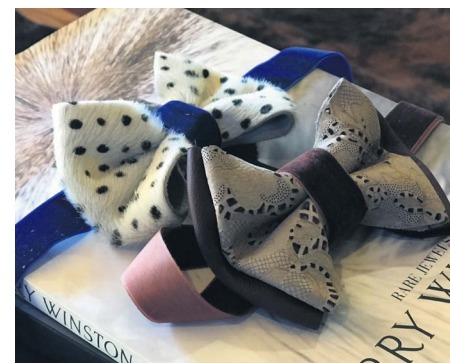
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Bronzeville's golden age in the 1920s, they try to evoke the style from the era with "classic and timeless" pieces: "There were real clean gentlemen who layered well and piled up on accessories like scarves, hats, and pocket squares. And they were creative—everybody had a sense of style. Even the milkman wore bow ties, suspenders, long socks, and capri shorts." Latrell affirms this aesthetic is "coming back tremendously" nowadays—and he strives to offer a wide array of quality products for the dapper chaps out there. "We don't make everything in the store, but we sell everything," he says. Besides bespoke suits made of wool, silk, or cashmere (starting at \$750), they also produce button-down shirts (starting at \$120), ties (starting at \$35), pocket squares (\$20), Italian leather shoes (starting at

\$350), and even a fragrance. Mulberry Silk (\$55) gives off citrus, fresh jasmine, patchouli, and vanilla notes, with a floral, spicy heart. "It is fresh yet masculine," Latrell says. "Like the fabric it is named after, it is meant to be worn every season. We launched it two months ago and already sold over 150 bottles." Agriculture also carries other brands, such as footwear by Mezlan and Bacco Bucci and sturdy cardigans made of twined rope imported from Turkey (\$90). For those in need of some guidance, Latrell prides himself in offering personalized service, in which he caters to his clients' unique needs: "We listen to what each person really wants and try to adapt our selection to their lifestyle—not the other way 'round." Besides custom tailoring, he and Brackenridge also do personal in-store styling sessions (\$50) and wardrobe assessments (\$185). "The main reason so many people support us is because we style them according to who they are," Latrell says. Celebrating 11 years in the business and cultivating famous customers like actor Mel Jackson and NBA players Luol Deng and Andrew Harrison, the Bronzeville natives really seem to be reaping what they sew. —ISA GIALLORENZO

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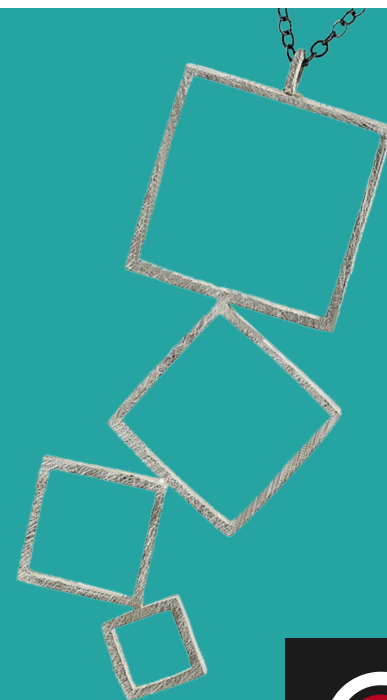
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POLITICS

The Petition Challenge

Not all mayoral candidates survive the arbitrary process.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

With the Christmas season upon us, Chicago Democrats will get in the spirit by dropping into the mud and doing a little wrestling, eye-gouging included.

The battle will heat up as mayoral and aldermanic candidates attempt to exploit arcane and arbitrary election laws to bounce their opponents from the ballot. Because, as we all know, it's hard to lose an election if you're running unopposed.

Twenty-one candidates filed to run for mayor. But my guess is no more than ten will survive the petition challenge process.

The most vulnerable of the front-runners is state comptroller Susana Mendoza, who “only” filed about 25,000 nominating signatures.

That's twice as many as the 12,500 signatures a mayoral candidate needs to make the ballot. But the rule of thumb is a candidate

needs at least three times the required number to survive a petition challenge.

So look for eagle-eyed election lawyers for Bill Daley and Toni Preckwinkle to challenge the validity of thousands of Mendoza's signatures.

There are several explanations as to why Chicago requires so many mayoral nominating petition signatures. The most idealistic one was recently offered by mayoral challenger Gery Chico, who opined that a “rigorous” ballot access challenge proves a candidate has the mettle to handle the tough job of being mayor.

My explanation is a little less dewy-eyed. I believe the high number is the result of a bipartisan effort in the 1990s by lawmakers to protect the incumbency of Mayor Richard M. Daley, for whom Chico once worked as chief of staff.

Until 1995, the rules required a mayoral candidate to gather about 3,000 signatures. But in the early 90s, Republican and Democratic legislators tag teamed to pass a law that gave

Chicago its current nonpartisan system for electing a mayor.

The new law neglected to stipulate a signature requirement. So a lawyer for the board of elections decided the board should require 25,000 on the grounds that—oh, he had his convoluted reasons.

Point is—gathering 25,000 signatures was a feat that pretty much no candidate, other than Mayor Daley, could accomplish. So think of that election law as affirmative action for Daley—like he needed it.

To his credit, Mayor Daley never challenged the petitions of his mayoral opponents even though it was obvious that most, if not all, would fall far short of the 25,000 requirement.

Of course, I suspect Daley knew it didn't really matter if he had an opponent because no one was going to beat him anyway. Plus, it would look unseemly if he just cruised to victory by bouncing all of his hapless opponents from the ballot—even the Soviet Union had the pretense of democratic elections back in the days of Comrade Brezhnev.

In 2003 Frank Avila, an election law attorney, filed suit on behalf of five long-shot mayoral candidates, charging that the 25,000 signature requirement was onerous and unconstitutional.

One of those candidates was Rafael Chagin, a part-time telephone solicitor who said he was running for mayor to “stand up for the common man.”

Hear, hear! Then as now, the common man needs all the help he can get around this town—I'll refrain from mentioning that Mayor Rahm's trying to stick the common men and women of Chicago with an \$800 million property tax bill for the Lincoln Yards project. Oops, too late—I mentioned it.

Anyway, Avila's case—like Chagin's mayoral candidacy—went nowhere. But the state legislators passed a law that halved the requirement to 12,500 because—well, I guess they figured it was the benevolent thing to do.

It's still the highest mayoral signature requirement in the country. So as you can see, we've got a long way to go in the benevolence department.

Ballot access cases are overseen by hearing

officers, who generally are smart enough to know what side of their bread is buttered—if you catch my drift.

Over the years, I've written many columns about how the system largely protects incumbents. Generally, I get a response from defenders of the status quo along the lines of—hey, man, rules are rules, and if challengers can't follow the rules, they don't deserve to get elected.

Fair enough. Of course, if the shoe's on the other foot? Well, consider the case of longtime 25th Ward alderman Danny Solis, a loyal supporter of mayors Daley and Rahm.

In 2007 a hearing officer ruled that Solis should remain on the ballot even though Solis's signature on his nominating petition didn't match the one on his economic disclosure statement that candidates are also required to file.

That led some people (myself included) to conclude that Solis had signed one document, but someone else had signed the other—a definite no-no for which most candidates would get bounced from the ballot.

But the hearing officer dismissed the challenge on the grounds that the man who had filed it had neglected to put his address on the challenge document. In other words, Solis survived on a technicality.

At the same time, Solis was also challenged for not putting the correct title of the office he was running for on his economic disclosure statement. (He wrote “City of Chicago” instead of “alderman of the 25th Ward”—apparently, it was a rough year for Danny in his ballot access filing.)

However, the same hearing officer dismissed that challenge on the grounds that Solis had made an inadvertent oversight.

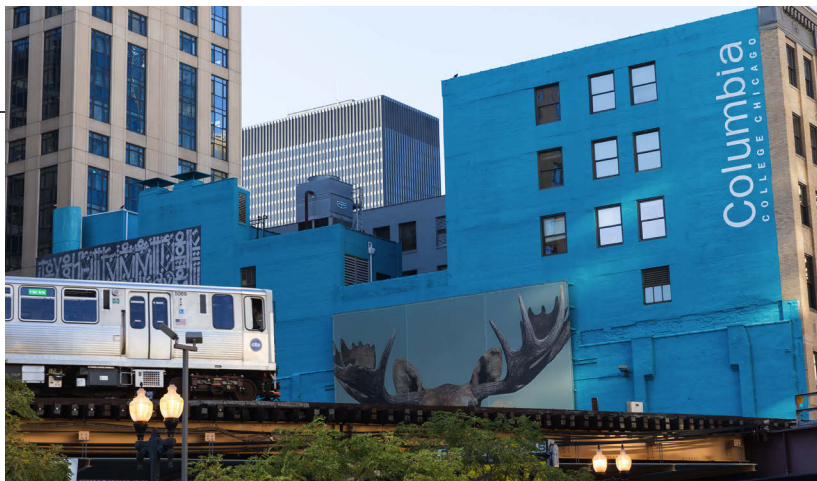
So, when a challenger makes a mistake, it's—rules must be followed, dammit! But when a longstanding mayoral aldermanic ally makes a mistake it's—c'mon, man, that's why pencils have erasers on them.

By the way, Solis recently announced that he wouldn't be running for reelection. So let me take this moment to say—good luck, Danny. As I've told you many times before—you've had more political lives than a cat.

For Susana Mendoza's sake—here's hoping she finds a hearing officer as forgiving as the one who saved Danny's aldermanic tush back in 2007.

Let the mud wrestling begin.

@BennyJshow



ON CULTURE

Union strong?

Columbia College's part-time faculty union goes after its own.

By DEANNA ISAACS

Strike rumors have been swirling around Columbia College for months now. The school's famously scrappy part-time faculty union—recently re-branded as CFAC (Columbia Faculty Union)—has been working without a contract since the last one expired in August 2017.

As negotiations dragged on, union leadership had been ramping up the strike talk. By Thanksgiving week, even the administration was warning that a walkout looked imminent.

The fall strike didn't materialize, but something more surprising did: the sudden appearance of a mysterious tribunal, the Membership Integrity Committee, summoning union members to hearings where they'd be tried on charges brought by anonymous accusers. Punishment, potentially including fines, expulsion from the union, and "legal action," would follow for those found guilty.

It's a complicated story, and a bizarre one to emerge on a 21st century college campus. As adjunct faculty member Jennie Fauls put it in a November 21 opinion piece on the website of the *Columbia Chronicle*, "The Integrity Committee might as well have posted their decree in the Salem, Massachusetts town square in the late 17th century."

On October 23 CFAC member and part-time administrative employee Gita Kapila sent an email to the entire membership with this attention-getting subject line: "Full disclosure: the union is broke."

"I am writing to inform you that the union is in debt," Kapila wrote, providing a link to a public document filed with the federal Department of Labor that summarized the union's finances. According to the document, at the end of the 2018 fiscal year on June 30 CFAC had negative net assets of \$23,509.

CFAC, it appears, was drawing its members into a potentially long-term strike without a strike fund or other assets.

Kapila added that she'd been fired from her job with the union the previous day.

Two days later, on October 25, the CFAC six-member Steering Committee (consisting of union officials) announced that it had established a new union body, the Membership Integrity Committee, "which shall be authorized to receive and hear charges filed by any member against any other member whose conduct is alleged to cause harm to the objects and aims of the Union . . . or harm to any member of the Union." No information was given about how many members the Integrity Committee would have, how they'd be selected, or who they'd be. But some members didn't have to wait long to see the committee in action.

Within a few weeks, Kapila and two other union members, Michele Hoffman and Carey Friedman, received Integrity Committee notices informing them that they'd been charged with causing harm to the union and summoning them to hearings. The charges were dated October 28; the hearings were scheduled for November 26, and they were told not to bring legal counsel.

Hoffman, who teaches marine biology, says the first thing to know is that "I am pro union." But, she adds, "I want a union that is democratic." Hoffman had been concerned about the vote for a two-day strike a year ago. It seemed premature to her, and she believes the way the vote was administered—online in a Google document that included identifying information—violated the union's bylaws.

Hoffman says that when the union leaders

started pushing for a longer "permanent" strike this fall, suggesting that the previous strike vote could be invoked to authorize it, and when they announced a press conference for October 17 calling for Columbia president Kwang-Wu Kim to resign, she decided to take action. She printed her own press release and handed it out at the event. Her statement contained a list of questions for CFAC president Diana Vallera. Hoffman wanted explanations for, among other things, salaries and other expenses and why members hadn't been informed about a 10 percent pay increase the college had offered during negotiations.

"I'm a Columbia alum," Hoffman says. "I went on and got a masters in marine science and a law degree, and I've been teaching here 21 years. This is very personal to me."

The summons she received from the Integrity Committee included charges that she had "passed out false information and made personal attacks on the union President." Her anonymous accuser asked that Hoffman be "disciplined for trying to undermine the union and its officers."

Friedman, a screenwriter and playwright who's been teaching at Columbia for 21 years, says his intention in raising questions "has been to return to rational negotiations and get a fair contract." On October 22, he emailed the CFAC membership a list of five questions for the union: Is there a strike fund? How many members signed strike cards? Why hadn't the union formally responded to the administration's contract proposal? Why is the union rejecting a federal moderator? And, have we explored all options before striking?

"I'm actually very pro-union," Friedman says. "This isn't union busting. It's union informing, so we can make proper decisions."

The charges against Friedman accuse him of using "improperly attained membership information to attack the union and make false personal attacks on the union President," and of doing so "on an email system hosted and controlled by management."

Kapila, who also teaches in the film department, says she was fired after pressing Vallera for invoices required to back up the figures that were reported to the DOL. The Integrity Committee initially charged that she used membership and financial information "without permission" to attack the union and "make false personal attacks on the union president." On November 12, she was sent an expanded list of charges. She was accused of "creating a hostile member faction," and her accuser called for an investigation of whether

she overpaid herself.

On November 30, two additional union members, Kathryn Bergquist and Paul Peditto, received notices of charges (dated November 26) that they "conspired, planned and executed a campaign to create harm to the Union, its leadership, its bargaining team and its membership by engaging in the deliberate dissemination of misinformation to the Union membership." Their hearings are scheduled for December 10.

All charging statements are written in first person, but none are signed. The membership of the Integrity Committee remains a mystery, and the accused question its legitimacy. The hearings for Hoffman and Friedman were supposedly held on November 26; not wishing to validate the proceedings, neither of them attended. At press time they hadn't heard anything further from the Integrity Committee.

CFAC's outside legal counsel, attorney Robert Bloch, said in an emailed statement: "The union steering committee established an integrity subcommittee to hear internal union charges filed by its members. The Integrity Subcommittee serves a copy of the charge upon the accused, schedules a hearing, and takes evidence. The Integrity committee issues a recommendation on the charges, subject to final review by the union's steering committee. These procedures are common in all labor unions and are conducted in accordance with the law."

And in a statement provided by CFAC president Vallera, union bargaining team member Susan Van Veen wrote that "it is a gross misrepresentation of fact to even suggest that the CFAC Union is broke." According to Van Veen, the union had a temporary cash flow issue its semi-annual dues, paid in November, would cover: "this is where many entities use a line of credit. To say we're broke is fake news and misreporting of facts."

Vallera also provided a statement from the union steering committee: "The Union received a paper trail . . . that revealed 6 members planned and plotted for a while to wrongfully obtain membership emails, to disrupt union business and discredit the union leadership all for self interest and with the goal to destabilize the union so that we would not have the strength needed to strike."

Vallera says a full report will be issued after the hearings.

Kapila's hearing has been rescheduled for December 7. She's not planning to attend.

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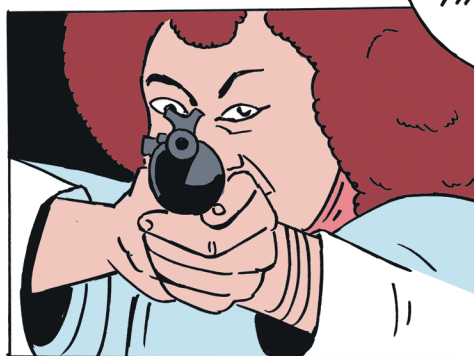
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JEAN SATTERFIELD AS "WOMEN'S ARMY" ORGANIZER ADELAIDE NORRIS.

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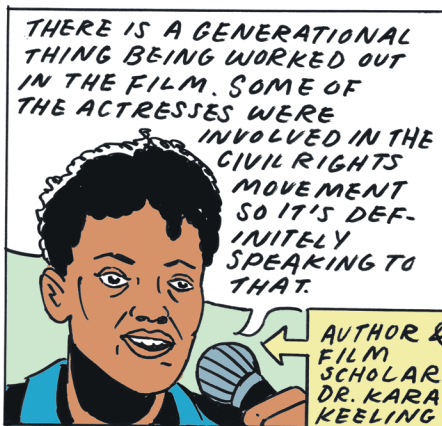
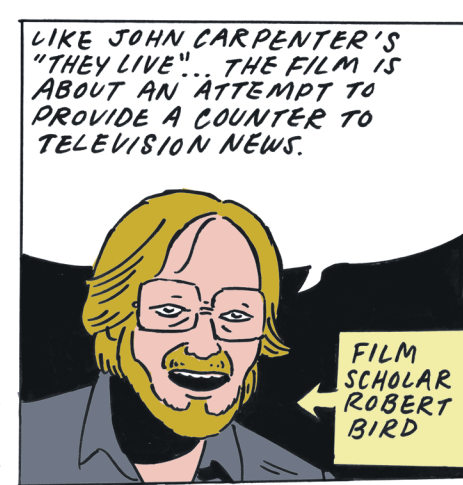
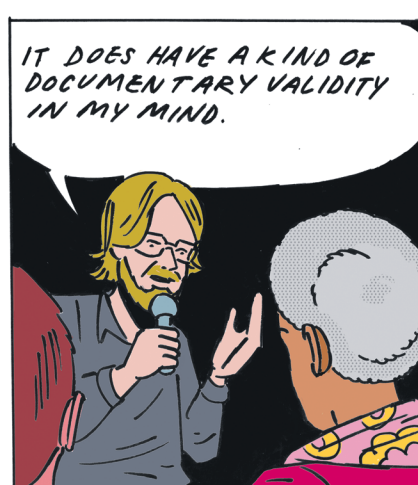


HONEY AS HERSELF

ADELE BERTEI AS ISABEL



THIS FIGHT WILL NOT END IN TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE. IT WILL NOT END IN NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST. IT BEGINS IN CELEBRATION OF THE RITES OF ALCHEMY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF SHIT INTO GOLD.



REMOVAL

Field Museum conservation technicians Ellen Jordan and J. Kae Good Bear work on an artifact in the Regenstein Lab.

JOHN WEINSTEIN

ON



DISPLAY

The Field Museum's Native North American Hall is starting to ask who it represents

By JOSHUA RIOS

The story of any North American natural history museum would also have to be, at least partially, a story about Native North Americans—about their physical removal from the land and cultural removal from a central position in our various national histories and narratives. Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History—in particular, the museum's Native North American Hall—is finding new ways to tell some of these stories.

Located just off the museum's southern entrance and adjacent to the gift shop, the hall features a sizable set of

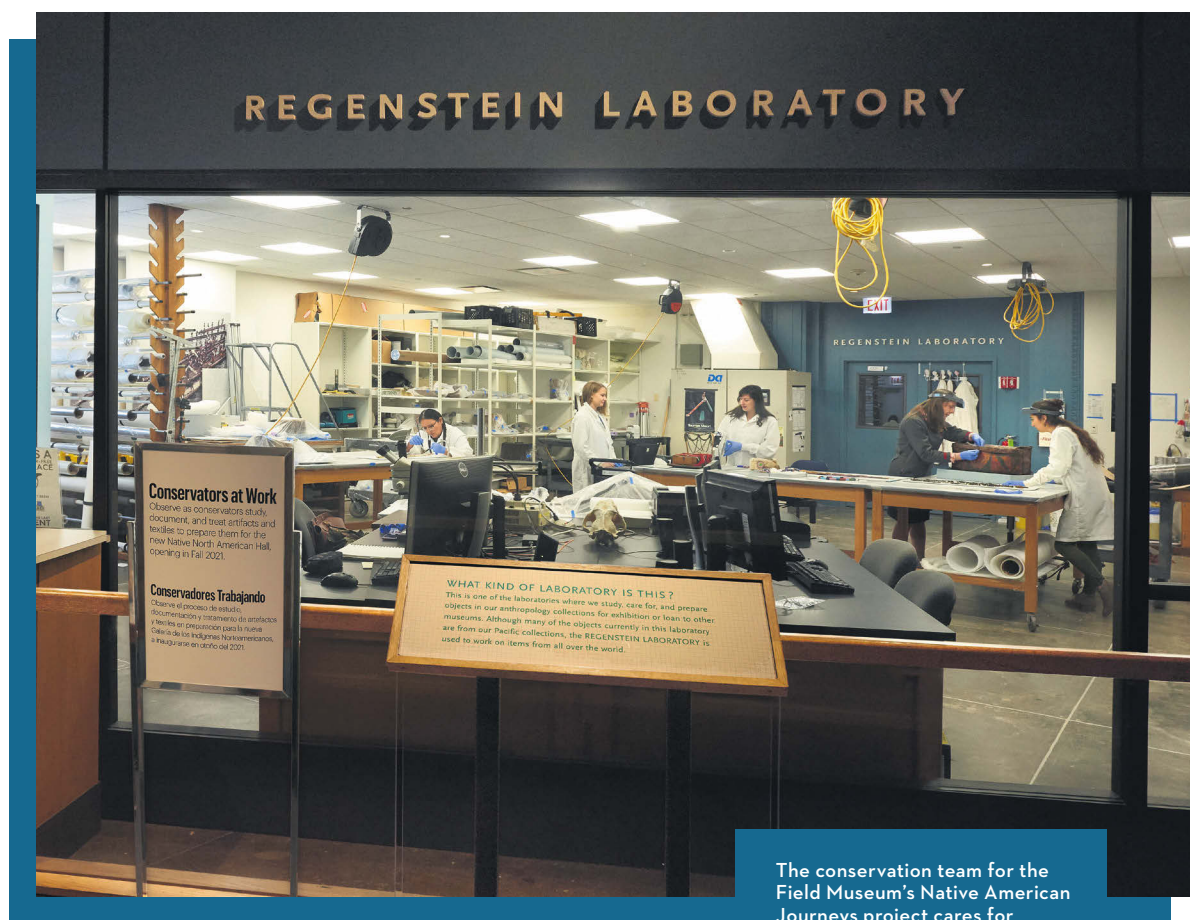
glass-fronted display cases and vitrines dedicated to exhibiting the cultural artifacts of numerous Native American peoples spanning from northern Mexico to Canada. The vitrines, reminiscent of department store window displays, are built into the very architecture of the space and span from floor to ceiling. Like the objects in any shop window, the hall's artifacts are meticulously arranged to create a desired effect. The casual viewer peruses the objects on display, each artifact carefully spaced and arranged on the wall like a diagram. Seeing the objects isolated and behind thick glass creates a false

sense in the viewer that knowledge is being gained through the simple act of looking. Given the scant descriptions of the objects provided, whatever knowledge may be grasped is likely insubstantial, and sits at the level of perception. In addition to some variously placed smaller displays, there are several large free-floating vitrines in the space, built in a similar manner, populated by faceless mannequins outfitted in the indigenous clothing of various nations. The display walls are painted an institutional shade of pale green. In disrepair, with some artifacts missing or showing signs of damage, the Native North American Hall appears to have been abandoned by the museum, which is tantamount to an abandonment of the museum's imperative to educate the public, to provide up-to-date information on developing ideas regarding the history and science of the objects it stewards, and to enunciate new stories those objects might tell.

While seemingly extensive, the exhibition represents only a small selection from a massive collection. Of the 70,000 Native North American cultural objects in the museum's collection, approximately 1,400 are arranged for display in the hall. For certain objects and histories—those not perceived as dynamic or vital—museum storage tends to be the first and final resting place. On one of my earliest visits to the hall, sometime in 2011, I was immediately struck by its quality of being stuck in time. Indeed, a key element of the hall's narrative is that the displays have remained largely untouched since their initial installation in the early 1950s. Entering the space is akin to opening a time capsule.

That feeling, however, is likely to change. On October 29, the Field Museum announced through a press release that it was planning a renovation for the hall scheduled to be completed by 2021. For some time previous to the announcement a sign had been posted at the entrance declaring, "This exhibit hall will be changing over the next few years to include fresh and more inclusive perspectives on Native American cultures." The wall text goes on to quote Dr. Patty Loew, a professor of journalism and director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at Northwestern University: "For too long our histories have been interpreted through an outsider's lens. This renovation, in which indigenous people are participating, provides an important and long-overdue opportunity for us to tell our own stories." A history told "through an outsider's lens" leaves a void that is especially empty for those groups that have been marginalized through political and legalized violence. The renovations, which will address the architecture of the hall as well as the larger cultural concerns, make visible the museum's new-found efforts to engage Native communities in order to better represent Native American histories and interpret Native American cultural objects. The renovations are taking place under the guidance of a robust advisory committee made up of contemporary Native American tribal leaders, scholars, artists, historical society representatives, and cultural caretakers. The reimagining of the hall will include rotating exhibits; more thoughtful, inclusive, and expansive museum didactics; and contemporary examples of Native American culture—which has continued to thrive even as the museum's displays have remained static.

What is at stake is the question of who has the authority to tell which stories, and how that telling influences and constructs our realities. Clearly, Native communities, including Chicago's, need to play a substantial role in how these objects



are displayed and discussed. In the press release, curator of North American anthropology Alaka Wali says, "It's not just a new exhibition—it represents a whole new way of thinking." Yet new ways of thinking do not happen on their own; they require concerted and committed efforts by groups of interested parties sustained over long periods.

Funding is also helpful. At the end of 2017, the Andrew Mellon Foundation awarded a \$700,000 grant "to support the reinstallation and reinterpretation of the Hall of Native North America at the Field Museum of Natural History." Such an award from such a recognized foundation reinforces what many people sensitive to Native American and Indigenous struggles already know: it is time to rethink the role natural history museums play in society. It is time to reconsider and even critique the kinds of stories and approaches to cultural representation that museums have historically championed and embraced.

By moving toward ongoing collaboration between the museum and the community it represents, as opposed to monolithic declarations regarding what culture is and how it should be presented, the museum seems to be embracing a more progressive role. From 2017 through 2019, the University of Chicago's Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society, in conjunction with the Field Museum, is hosting a project titled *Open Fields: Ethics, Aesthetics and the Very Idea of a Natural History*. The series of open-ended discussions was conceived as a response to natural history museum displays of Native American and Indigenous artifacts, with the express goal of considering how certain tactics of cultural exhibitions

are becoming more and more out of date, and to acknowledge how rarely displays of Native American artifacts found in large public institutions reflect how Native Americans see and construct their own heritages and identities. The questions posed by the historical practices of the natural history museum point a way toward understanding how such institutions might represent other people's cultures in ways that are inclusive and appropriate and that acknowledge the past, as opposed to repressing it.

Despite the museum's exciting plans, it is important to understand the reasons why such a renovation and reconsideration of the hall would be necessary in the first place. Delving into the history of the natural history museum, how and why it came to be, for whom and at what cost, requires facing a toxic past and its real and symbolic effects.

The press packet regarding the hall's renovation includes several photographs of conservation technicians in white coats standing over artifacts. These museum workers are examining and measuring the objects inside the Regenstein Laboratory, a 1,600-square-foot conservation and collections management facility on the museum's upper floor. The process of deinstallation by the museum, an exhuming of artifacts from their display cases, is itself a preservation effort that requires careful steps. Objects that have been exhibited for so long pose certain kinds of risks, and one caption in the press materials alludes to "harmful chemicals" common to "old collection practices." The objects, in other words, can have genuinely toxic effects if not handled properly. ➔

continued from 11

It is also worth noting that many U.S. natural history museums have large collections of human remains, which are disproportionately Native American or non-European. Archaeology, which includes the material practice of removing artifacts from designated archaeological sites, was one of the driving forces behind the fervent collection of such remains. The question of why Native American remains were understood to be collectible is directly related to European conceptualizations of who does and does not count as fully human, who is part of history and who is categorized as prehistoric. “Savage,” “barbaric,” and “civilized,” far from loose descriptions, were official categories that late 19th century anthropologists, ethnologists, and social theorists used to create an evolutionary model of social development. Prominent 19th century writers and thinkers such as Edward B. Tylor promoted the idea that all cultures passed through these three universal stages, which cast European styles of life as the most developed and desirable. Unsurprisingly, non-Europeans, including people indigenous to North America, were mostly seen as lacking, stuck in the past, underdeveloped, or about to disappear.

But what is the specific history of the Field Museum? Founded after the World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893, the museum owes much of its initial collection to the work of turn-of-the-century anthropologists Frederic Ward Putnam and Franz Boas. Key figures in the development of U.S. ethnology, anthropology, and archaeology, they organized an extensive anthropological building for the Exposition that showcased Indigenous and Native artifacts, skeletal remains, and related information explicitly displayed to invite visitors to follow humanity’s progress from primitive to civilized. Afterward, Putnam worked to find a benefactor who would fund preservation of the fair’s anthropology displays. Ultimately, timber magnate Edward Ayer, whose world-class collection of books and manuscripts related to Native American and precolonial cultures is now at Chicago’s Newberry Library, convinced Chicago-based department store mogul Marshall Field to fund the establishment of a museum. Initially called the Columbian Museum of Chicago, the museum’s name was later changed to honor Field, and the Columbian Exposition displays were preserved.

In a 2002 issue of *Fieldiana*, an academic journal published

by the Field Museum, the late 19th century is described as a time when “there was a feeling among American anthropologists that the aboriginal cultures of the New World should be studied immediately, before the native way of life vanished forever.” The use of the neutral term “vanished” stands out. Native lifeways did not simply disappear by accident but were systematically destroyed—as a focused project of public policy and populist politics, through means including outright war and the deployment of well-armed vigilante and volunteer militias subsidized by federal and state governments. In California, according to historian Benjamin Madley, extensive fund-raising was needed to pay for the work that was Indian killing throughout the mid- and late-1800s. His book *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe* describes how the Native Californian population was reduced from 150,000 to 30,000 between the years 1846 and 1870, largely a result of state-sanctioned and state-supported massacres. And while the term “genocide” did not gain a legal definition until the post-World War II 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, Madley and others advocate for formally applying the legal definition of the term to U.S.-sponsored Native American massacres during the late 1800s. To retroactively and rightly frame Indian removal as genocide is to label it a crime recognized under international law, which would have profound legal ramifications. That such actions were “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” as defined by the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, is a statement that stands largely unquestioned today but is only the first step in a long process that has both legal and cultural implications. Reframing Indian removal as genocide presents a new set of welcome problems for the politics of social and collective memory within a U.S. context. It would demand a reconsideration of the traumatic tales and experiences of colonialism, not only in the privacy of one’s personal life but more importantly, in the public space of our cultural institutions. A formalized national-scale reassessment of public forms of historical remembrance, including monuments, textbooks, and museums, would be required. History—in all these forms—is written by the conqueror and thus tends to explain events in a way that justifies their cultural and economic domination. Also up for debate would be how a nation built on state-sanctioned systematic violence should

apologize for and recompense those affected by its practices. Clearly, the United States has an aversion to facing its past and is long overdue for a moment of truth and reconciliation.

To purposefully, systematically destroy something while simultaneously portraying it as simply vanishing creates a complicated political, philosophical, and social reality that requires recounting. Late 19th century American anthropologists felt it was urgent to study what was being made to disappear, so they gathered as much material as possible without regard to whether it would be analyzed later. This large-scale project of gathering and preservation is a key component of what is commonly referred to as “salvage anthropology.” To salvage means “to save”; thus, “salvage anthropology” aims to use the act of collecting artifacts as a means of saving those cultures in danger of disappearing. But the act of collection necessarily removed cultural objects from their contexts, making it that much harder for Native communities to preserve their traditions within their communities rather than have them become objects for study. When a non-Native institution preemptively assumes Native American cultures need preservation, it ignores all the ways that Native American cultures have preserved and cared for themselves for thousands of years through social practices that preexisted the appearance of European settlers, anthropology, or natural history museums. The Field Museum’s new policies regarding community engagement now include making artifacts available to Native American artisans so that they can examine in detail, for instance, how certain ceremonial capes and other significant garments and objects are put together. But such a policy requires that these contemporary Indigenous makers travel to Chicago to visit artifacts that arguably belong in tribal and reservation museums, or even in personal Native American collections. Such a policy prompts one to ask how tradition comes to be interrupted in the first place and to question the palliative policy of allowing people to visit their heritage in order to reestablish or strengthen traditions they have a right not only to visit but to reclaim. Essentially, those who claim the authority to know how best to preserve or salvage other people’s cultures and who assume the responsibility to take care of what remains are taking a paternalistic position.

What room does salvage anthropology leave for the transformation and updating of tradition? Not much. To salvage and display objects from cultures that are being destroyed is to relegate those cultures to the past, as if they are no longer capable of growth, as if they have always been ancient or prehistoric. Customs are not as static as we may believe. All cultural groups reinvent and renew customs and practices in response to the particular needs of the times. Chicago, for example, has one of the largest urban Native American populations in the country, with members of more than 100 tribal nations living here. According to the website of the city’s American Indian Center, the oldest urban Indian center in the country, it serves approximately “65,000 American Indians [living] in Chicagoland’s six-county region.” That the Field Museum’s hall has not historically addressed this vibrant population and its ongoing cultural value, at least not until very recently, is indicative of how Native American cultures are only seen to exist as part of a pre-European settler past.

Viewing the disheveled collection might lead one to ask, whom does the Native North American Hall represent? At first glance, the obvious answer might be the original owners of

WHAT IS AT STAKE IS THE QUESTION OF WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO TELL WHICH STORIES, AND HOW THAT TELLING INFLUENCES AND CONSTRUCTS OUR REALITIES.



Maritza Garcia of the Mississippi Choctaw performing a jingle dress dance at a ceremony on October 26. The ceremony recognized that the Field Museum rests on the homeland of three tribes.  MICHELLE KUO

these arranged artifacts. Clearly, large museums are complex organizations emerging from multiple and even competing perspectives, making it impossible to determine or even formulate a single coherent vision. Nevertheless, museums do establish and reflect prevailing beliefs and sensibilities, including the hidden and not-so-hidden biases that shape how we define, imagine, and evaluate those people we see as different. The objects and cultural artifacts that have been collected and displayed enhance the prestige and advance the worldview of the institutions that do the collecting and displaying. Such exhibitions reflect the assumptions and intentions of the organizers as much as the presumed assumptions of the expected audience (in the Field's case, close to two million visitors in 2017). Whomever the hall represents (collectors, curators, or

some anticipated audience), the producers of these objects have historically had little say in any part of the process. Could such a place ever feel welcoming to Native North Americans?

At the same time, the renovation of the hall has opened up a field of possibilities beyond simply changing out artifacts. The contemporary art exhibition, *Drawing on Tradition*, on display in the Native North American Hall through January 21, was organized by the museum in collaboration with contemporary Native American artist Chris Pappan. The exhibition, part of the museum's campaign to reform its relation to outmoded and racist styles of anthropology, acts as something of a historical intervention by providing an example of what role the artist can play in bringing attention to natural history museums and their histories, as well as to larger social issues connected

to the forceful removal of Native Americans and the violent resettlement of North America. Pappan uses several types of media—paintings and drawings, installations directly on the glass of the vitrines, and video and sound work—to engage in direct dialogue with the hall. His Kaw, Osage, and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe heritage informs the work, which revolves around the traditional practice of ledger art. This Plains Indian practice of narrative drawing began on hides, bones, and rocks thousands of years ago and was eventually adapted to paper with the arrival of non-Native traders, government agents, missionaries, and military officers who carried ledger books and other record-keeping paper during their expeditions. This history situates ledger art as a dynamic creative practice that relied on traditional approaches of storytelling updated ➔



Assistant conservators
Nicole Passerotti
and Erin Murphy
test for harmful
chemicals that may be
present due to old
collection practices.
JOHN WEINSTEIN



Lead conservator
Stephanie
Hornbeck (right)
with conservation
technicians J. Kae
Good Bear (center)
and Ellen Jordan
(left) work in the
Regenstein Lab.
JOHN WEINSTEIN

continued from 13

to meet the demands of the times and the availability of new materials. Pappan carries forward the practice of adapting tradition, showing how vibrant the result can be when undertaken in a critical yet faithful manner.

This can be seen in his drawings and paintings, which feature digital-adjacent processes like skewing, solarizing, mirroring, and stretching. Pappan's distorted figures and objects, which operate in relation to the distorting outsider's lens, vacillate between historic personalities, mundane objects, and myth. *Anna's Spirit* (2014) uses delicate graphite lines, inkjet printing, and map collage on ledger paper to memorialize Anna Brown. Brown was one of the first victims of the infamous Osage Indian murders of the 1920s precipitated by the discovery of oil on the Osage reservation in Oklahoma. In *Pow Wow Chair*, ca. 1980 (2016), Pappan lovingly renders

foldinglawn chair with intricate precision using acrylic and collaged fragments of maps. In the wall panel explaining the work, Pappan writes, "When you go to a powwow, you put your folding chair down, and that's your area and people know where to find you . . . It's temporary and portable, like everything in life for the Plains people." For the exhibition, which is meant to prompt viewers to question the nature of the vitrines and displays, Pappan has also produced a series of large-scale semitransparent prints that are adhered directly to the glass of the display cases. Some of the prints feature enlarged duplicates of Pappan's graphic works, others feature images from historic ledger art found in the museum's collection, and still others feature fragments of maps—especially maps related to Indian removal, which speak to complex feelings of dislocation and layered understandings of home.

To guide his artistic process, Pappan started with a long

period of research, visiting the museum and its archives routinely. The semitransparent prints offer a critical image to reflect on while partially blocking the viewer's ability to gaze freely at the displayed artifacts behind the glass. Pappan's transparencies function to literally interrupt what would otherwise be a smooth looking experience. The thoughtful planning of the exhibition particularly shines through in the pairing of Pappan's contemporary ledger art with works by one of the most prolific and well known turn-of-the-century ledger artists, Silver Horn. A member of the Kiowa, a Plains tribe in the Oklahoma region, Silver Horn produced thousands of works on paper throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s. One of the key works in the exhibition that exemplifies the idea of drawing on tradition while simultaneously updating it is a mixed-media work by Pappan titled *Hero Mythologies* (2016). The graphite and acrylic work is drawn, collaged, and painted on ledger paper from 1907 and presents a modernized visual narrative of the Split Boys story. The story begins with a Kiowa woman climbing up a tree to the sky world, where she meets the Son of the Sun with whom she has a child. One day she decides to return to earth and lowers a rope. The Son of the Sun hits her with a stone, killing her. The child is found alive and cared for by an old Spider Woman. When the child is older, he plays with a hoop. He throws it up, and when it comes down it splits the boy in two. The two boys go on to have many adventures together. Eventually one of the boys disappears and the other splits himself into ten pieces or bundles, which are considered sacred objects for the Kiowa people. Near Pappan's interpretation of that tale is a digital touch screen displaying the same story told by Silver Horn. The two versions resonate and reverberate in a way that challenges many of the assumptions operating in the Native North American Hall. Pappan enlivens the story for a contemporary audience.

Also included in the exhibition is a video installation projected high above the artifacts and displays. It is large enough to be seen as one enters the hall from the museum's atrium. Here, Pappan collaborated with photojournalist Adam Sings in the Timber and photographer Debra Yepa-Pappan, as well as with musician Santiago X. The video's soundtrack loops and echoes throughout the space, a slow electronic beat mixing occasionally with audio captured during a 1983 powwow in Macy, Nebraska. The installation continues to update and redefine the notion of ledger art, this time by digitally superimposing portraits of contemporary Native American folks over early moving image footage credited to Thomas Edison. The digitally altered video samples the well-known Buffalo Dance film originally made in 1894. Regarded as one of the earliest films made of Native Americans, it depicts Hair Coat, Parts His Hair, and Last Horse dancing in a circle with several other people in the background. The three Lakota warriors, once performers for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, now dance to a digitally produced electronic beat and are intermittently punctuated by powerful portraits made of Native Americans by Native Americans.

It is fitting, given how often Native American stories are told by non-Natives, to end this account of the clash of cultural histories by quoting the artist. "We will not be relegated to the past nor be considered mere victims of historical trauma," Pappan writes in the exhibition wall text. "We are a thriving people, and we have not abandoned the things that make us unique in the world. Our culture isn't stagnant, it changes with the times and is a living thing." **A**

Goth Bread
MATTHEW GILSON

RESTAURANT REVIEW

At Young American Nick Jirasek will paint it black

The upcoming barstaurant from Leisure Activities will serve up life, wellness, freshness, and death.

By MIKE SULA

The menu for Logan Square's upcoming Young American will feature "Goth" bread, blackened with activated charcoal and leek ash, along with hummus stained with black sesame tahini. There will be "nighttime *sisig*," the porky Filipino pig face skillet, stir-fried with squid ink. And there will be a fermented Chinese black bean brandade, garnished with dulse, the umami-rich sea vegetable that looks like something that would wrap around your limbs and pull you under the water.

"We're putting the beans in with the butter that goes in with whipping the potatoes," says

chef Nick Jirasek. "So they kind of seep out, almost bleeding into the emulsion, like chocolate chip ice cream. The red sea lettuce is like a forest floor. It's dead—but in a good way. A lot of the things will look very dead."

That's a pretty dark turn from his fun, nostalgic American bar food menu at Old Habits/Ludlow Liquors. And it seems at odds with the chirpy press release that announced its impending arrival last September: "Young Americans are brimming with energy and creativity, they approach life with a sense of possibility, inclusivity and purpose." Then again, the lyrics to the 1975 Bowie hit it references—about

squandered youth and a dead-end marriage—couldn't be more at odds with the music's exuberant plastic soul.

Jirasek, who came up cooking in the art scene and whose food has always been high concept, maintains there's nothing sinister in these dishes. In fact, his menu is built upon ingredients that haven't yet gone mainstream but are prevalent in diets associated with the so-called wellness movement.

"So much of what I've been doing over the past five or six years has been interacting with people I know who have these weird, different eating habits and wanting to empathize with

that in some way. I'm just playing with these ingredients and trying to use them in a way that is more culinarily focused." In other words: not diet food.

OK, black, or just dark foods in general, are high in anthocyanins, antioxidants that some believe have antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer properties. But Jirasek also wants to prank on the misconception that freshness and wholesomeness is a de facto bright, dewy, market-fresh Instagram post bedecked with edible microflora. A lot of the foods he's experimenting with will be challenging to behold, and perhaps challenging for some to understand. ➔



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The Coffee & Tea Exchange

continued from 15

That's why the bar, opening shortly after the New Year in the space once occupied by Johnny's Grill and Mezcaleria Las Flores, is adopting a chef-centered service model. Jirasek's cooks will also be serving the food, which brings them into the tip pool and also situates them to explain that the kava that flavors the adobo-braised Spanish peanuts is a Polynesian plant, known for its sedative, euphoric effects, that lends the dish a floral, numbing sensation, not unlike a Sichuan peppercorn. They can tell you that the lamb tartare seasoned with black cardamom and cumin is a play on Ethiopian *kitfo*, and will just briefly be sizzled in hot chili oil. They can explain that the mignonette served with the steamed Gulf oysters is made with raisiny-tasting sea buckthorn juice, garlic, and ginger, and has a North African profile. And they'll point out that the "calmonds" are roasted and seasoned with thyme, chicken salt, chamomile, and olive oil infused with CBD, the soothing, nonpsychoactive cannabinoid on everyone's nightstand.

The bar program, helmed by Julia McKinley, formerly of Lonesome Rose, Lost Lake, and the Milk Room, will feature a handful of nonalcoholic cocktails, offered with an option to spike them with CBD powder. There's a turmeric tonic tea, with hibiscus, lime, and aquafaba, the canned

chickpea liquid beloved by vegans for its ability to be aerated into foams and meringue; and Electric Eye, made with a tea spiked with gin botanicals, lapsang souchong, and lemon soda.

"I'm using a lot of turmeric to come up with nonalcoholic cocktails," says McKinley. "You want something to give somebody pause; something that gives you a sensation, something you don't want to slam. It's part of creating an environment that's fun and chill to hang out in even if you aren't drinking."

Young American comes from Leisure Activities, the group fronted by Wade McElroy and Jeff Donahue, known for Sportsman's Club, Estereo, and Larry's before they lured Jirasek back from the Mendocino County cannabis farm he was cooking at to open Ludlow Liquors.

Jirasek says the name they chose stirred up some guff in informal focus groups among people who don't feel particularly proud to be Americans at the moment.

"We got some negative reaction because of 'Make America Great Again,'" he says. "But part of what we're trying to do is take back the idea of what it is to be youthful and hopeful in America and at the same time acknowledge there's a lot of fucking crazy fucked-up shit going on. So, yeah: life, death, freshness."

@MikeSula



Chloe Johnston and Coya Paz Brownrigg
JOE MAZZA

THEATER

Yes and ?

From Hull House to Second City, *Ensemble-Made Chicago* documents a distinctively democratic way of making theater.

By KRIS VIRE

In its \$5.5 million venue on the Mag Mile next door to Water Tower Place, Lookingglass Theatre Company produces big-budget, movement-based spectacles, often adapted from literary sources.

Meanwhile in Andersonville, in a ramshackle walk-up space above a former funeral home, the Neo-Futurists perform intensely personal, artifice-free stories that get updated every week, staged by the seat of their collective pants.

Both companies marked their 30th anniversaries this year. Beyond that, though, even the most ardent Chicago theatergoer might be hard-pressed to find common ground between their artistic practices, let alone a connective tissue that also links them to the educational troupe Barrel of Monkeys, the women-of-color performance collective FEMelanin, and the sketch comedy institution that is Second City.

But the authors of a new book just out from Northwestern University Press argue that all of these groups share a common DNA. And that strand, coauthors Chloe Johnston and Coya Paz Brownrigg write in *Ensemble-Made Chicago*, can be traced all the way back to Jane Addams.

"You know, we talk about Chicago as an ensemble town, and we almost always mean it in

the Steppenwolf model. And no shade to Steppenwolf," Paz Brownrigg says, "but we have a tradition in Chicago that predates that—the ensemble practice we're talking about here, [which] you see dating back to Hull House. It's been fun to trace those threads and see where they pop up and disappear and return."

Instead of the Steppenwolf definition of ensemble—"a scrappy band of actors putting on a play," as Paz Brownrigg puts it—*Ensemble-Made Chicago* describes a practice of collective creation that starts not with a script but with people. "You're not starting with the presupposition that you need a playwright who's written a play, a director who's in charge of it, designers who do X, Y, and Z and only X, Y, and Z—all these things that we just assume is the prerequisite for the work we make," Paz Brownrigg says.

Both authors are academics—Paz Brownrigg is an associate dean and chair of Theatre Studies at the Theatre School at DePaul University and Johnston is an associate professor of theater at Lake Forest College—as well as practitioners with deep ties to some of the companies represented in their book: Paz Brownrigg was a cofounder of Teatro Luna and is the current artistic director of Free Street Theater, each of which gets a chapter in

Ensemble-Made Chicago, while Johnston was a longtime performer with the Neo-Futurists. The germ of the book was born at a performance studies conference in Madison, Wisconsin, where both authors were scheduled to conduct workshops at the same time and ended up combining forces.

"It was on the fly. We had no preparation time, but it worked out really well," Johnston recalls. "There's exercises that you did that day that I still use to this day," she tells Paz Brownrigg.

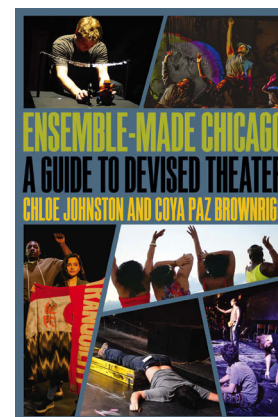
"We both teach classes in ensemble practice," Paz Brownrigg says, "but there's not really a good textbook for it. And ensemble-made practice is really hard to archive because it doesn't start with a script, doesn't always end with a script. So we kind of started joking about writing a book we could teach, and then we weren't joking."

"We call it a history and a handbook of collaboratively made theater in Chicago," says Johnston. Each of the book's 15 chapters profiles a different company that uses a similar practice, one that favors collective creation over a preset hierarchy, to achieve sometimes wildly different final products. In lieu of providing scripts, it documents some of the generative exercises, or games, the companies use in rehearsal rooms to spark creation.

ENSEMBLE-MADE CHICAGO

By Chloe Johnston and Coya Paz Brownrigg (Northwestern University Press). Launch party Mon 12/10, 7 PM, Theater on the Lake, 2401 N. Lake Shore, 312-414-1313, [facebook.com. FREE](https://facebook.com/free)

These games can be remarkably similar in structure to each other, yet bear the imprint of the particular groups that use them. As an example, Paz Brownrigg notes the "pushing" games offered by the all-female Teatro Luna and all-male Young Fugitives. Though similar on the page, Teatro Luna's "involves so much, like, talking about feeling and like what I see in you and they're all crying at the end and hugging each other," while in the Young Fugitives version, "they really are, like, sumo wrestling, trying to, like, push each other out of the space and work out all of their aggression."



The cross-pollination these exercises represents can all be traced back, the authors claim, to Viola Spolin. The mother of Second City cofounder Paul Sills, Spolin codified the theater games that influenced her son's company in another NU Press book, 1963's *Improvisation for the Theater*, but she first developed them while teaching at Jane Addams's Hull House in the 1920s with sociologist Neva Boyd. Boyd used storytelling games and ritualized play to encourage social interaction among Hull House's clients, many of whom were recent immigrants. These games made it possible for anyone to be an equal contributor and collaborator and helped bridge barriers of language and culture; Spolin brought them explicitly into the realm of theater.

The ensemble-made model, Johnston and Paz Brownrigg write, owes its genetics to Spolin's games—which themselves owe a debt to the social work ethos of Hull House. It's no coincidence that most of the companies profiled in their book use their games, descendants of Spolin's, to make work with a strong social justice bent. Even Second City, "the company that you might think is the least kind of like social justice-y," Paz Brownrigg says, "talked really, really passionately about their social justice roots, about why their work was inherently democratic, for the audience and for the makers."

That outlook extends into the structure of *Ensemble-Made Chicago* itself. "Something that was really important to us was to get Second City in the same book as Young Fugitives or FEMelanin or some of these really younger companies," Johnston notes. "There's value in what's happening right now and there's value in what's been happening for 50 years. There's a certain egalitarianism there that feels—it feels like Chicago." ■

@krisvire

ARTS & CULTURE

THE INFINITE WRENCH
 Fri-Sat 11:30 PM, Sun 7 PM, Neo-Futurist
 Theater, 5153 N. Ashland, 773-878-4557,
 neofuturists.org, \$10-\$15 walk-up, \$20 online.

THE NUTCRACKER
 12/1-12/30: Thu-Fri 7 PM, Sat-Sun 2 and 7 PM; also Wed 12/19, 7
 PM; Wed 12/26, 2 PM; Fri 12/21 and 12/28, 2 PM; and Mon 12/24,
 2 PM, Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Ida B. Wells, 312-386-8905,
 joffrey.org, \$35-\$179.

THEATER

More light

Two years after Greg Allen pulled *Too Much Light*, the Neo-Futurists continue with *The Infinite Wrench*.

By JUSTIN HAYFORD

To see the difference between the Neo-Futurists' *Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind*, Greg Allen's long-running hit that featured an exuberant, lyrically inclined ensemble scrambling to perform 30 original plays in 60 minutes, and the Neo-Futurists' *The Infinite Wrench*, the replacement show that does the same stuff in the same theater in the same time slot, you have to squint awfully hard.

Allen pulled the rights to *Too Much Light*—at least the Chicago production of it—at the end of 2016, arguing that the rise of Trumpism required it. “I could no longer stand by

and let my most effective artistic vehicle be anything but a machine to fight Fascism,” he announced via press release, adding that he'd create a new ensemble “comprised entirely of people of color, LGBTQ+, artist/activist women, and other disenfranchised voices in order to combat the tyranny of censorship and oppression.” The fact that *Too Much Light* had always included such individuals in

its numerous casts and that Allen was allowing the New York, London, and San Francisco *Too Much Light* franchises to continue unchanged left many in Chicago's theater world scratching their heads and, disappointingly, airing long-pent-up venom against Allen on social media and in print.

In the two years since the demise of *Too Much Light*, Allen's new anti-fascist ensemble hasn't materialized. But the Neo-Futurists, under Kurt Chiang's artistic direction, have continued full steam ahead, almost as though calling Allen's bluff. *The Infinite Wrench* adds the slightest of tweaks to Allen's show, providing the audience the same “menu” of 30 play titles, which they “order” on demand, each play beginning when its title is snatched from a clothesline strung above the stage. The ensemble still gives itself 60 minutes on the same darkroom timer, and they still order a pizza for the audience when the show sells out. But now, at the end of each play, the performers yell “Next!” instead of “Curtain!”

Allen should take all this as a compliment. The form and structure of *Too Much Light* can hardly be improved on, although the new show's adding a “wrench” each night—some spontaneous mucking with the show's conventions—creates an extra bit of meddlesome urgency (on the sold-out night I attended, someone decided the show would end when the pizza delivery person showed up).

Most importantly, the ingenuity and engagement of the work not only remains but has deepened. With only the occasional misstep into poetic opacity, the ensemble maps thorny social, psychological, and political terrain with foolishness and ferocity. And watching a dozen or so people sprint for an hour, setting up and tearing down plays they've barely had time to rehearse, remains exhilarating and vital. **A**



JOE MAZZA



CHERYL MANN

DANCE

Devil in the white city

The Joffrey's *Nutcracker* abandons plot, pathos, and palatable choreography in favor of special effects.

CURTAIN UP on the Joffrey's third season of Christopher Wheeldon's *Nutcracker*, which resituates the popular Christmas ballet in Chicago during the 1893 Columbian Exposition. In his note to the program, artistic director Ashley Wheeler quotes historian Peter Bacon Hales: “The White City is a utopian city, a model for redefining modern urban life.” However, Wheeler doesn't get to the end of the paragraph: “But it was doomed to decay and disappearance: its best hope . . . was to have it burn in one vast conflagration, rather than betray its promise.” Those plaster edifices, hastily spray-painted with lead white-wash, offer an apt metaphor for this *Nutcracker*, a production that seems to have spent the bulk of its \$4 million budget on special effects at the expense of plot, pathos, or even palatable choreography. What place do unironic jazz hands have in the glittering dash of the Waltz of the Snowflakes? But then, how else can one create the illusion of movement when the choreographic vision has decreed all flurries must stand still?

Marie's journey through the White City in the company of a magic nutcracker takes her through pavilions that reveal outmoded stereotypes of various regions of the world. The most memorable dances are also the most offensive: a hypersexual Arabian duet, Buffalo Bill chasing three showgirls with a lasso. Most charming is the pert band of child Walnuts who ham it up beneath the skirts of a sassy Mother Nutcracker. It almost makes you forget that once this was a heartwarming holiday ballet about adolescent awakening as mediated by a slightly creepy uncle. **—IRENE HSIAO**

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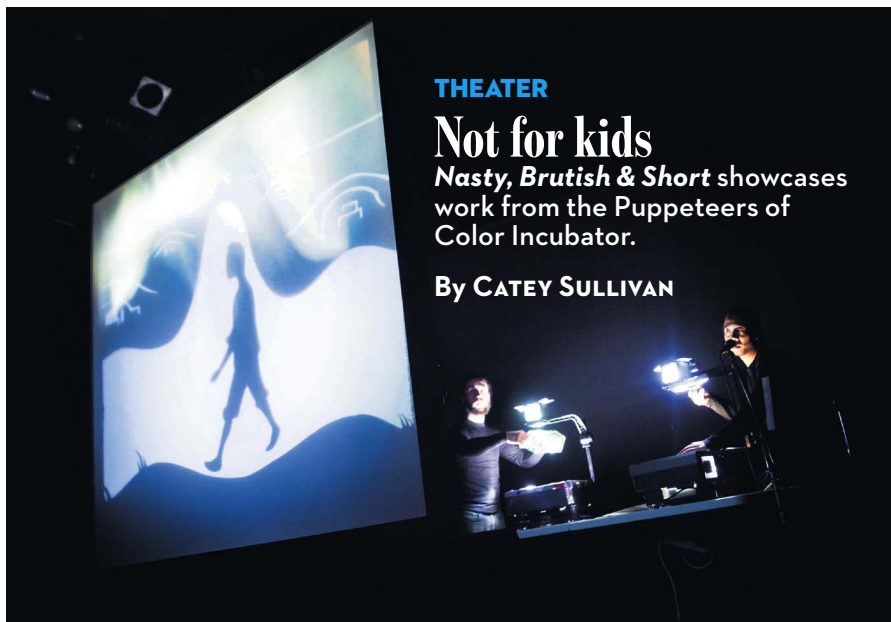
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2018/19 BENEFACTORS



NASTY, BRUTISH & SHORT
Mon 12/10, 7:30 PM, Links Hall, 3111 N.
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THEATER

Not for kids

Nasty, Brutish & Short showcases work from the Puppeteers of Color Incubator.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

You could call south side native Allyson Gonzalez a puppeteer, but “alchemist” is not wholly inaccurate. How else to describe an artist who can turn used Styrofoam cups and shredded loofahs into tiny ballerinas? “I try not to buy anything,” Gonzalez says of the materials she transforms into idiosyncratic creatures on grand adventures. “Once I copied an Alexander McQueen gown. It was mostly paper towels and wire. I loved that dress.”

Gonzalez’s recycled, upcycled, and serendipitously found items are part of *Nasty, Brutish & Short*, an adult puppet cabaret showcasing artists from the Puppeteers of Color Incubator (POCI). Curated by Jamillah Hinson and Nik Whitcomb, the December 10 event presented by Links Hall and the Rough House Theater will feature works ranging from Gonzalez’s NPR-inspired “This Gonzalez is Coming for Your Job” to pieces based on works by Zora Neale Hurston and Washington Irving.

“We wanted to show puppetry as a high art form, not just for kids,” says Hinson, who co-curated the cabaret under the auspices of Chicago’s Art Leaders of Color Network. Toward that end, *NB&S* will include short pieces starring shadow puppets, intricately joined reed puppets, puppets based in Japanese Bunraku traditions, and puppets that defy categorization. The POCI artists have been working since August on their creations, meeting monthly for workshops and mentorship. Gonzalez found inspiration for her piece during a cab ride.

“The driver was listening to a story about the [migrant] caravan, and I heard my name,” she says. “It got my brain churning—I started thinking how global my last name is, and what the implications of that are. I wanted to explore that. I’m not showing the caravan—if people want to see pictures, they can go to the news. This is about capturing the spirit and the struggle—which is different depending on where you are geographically—of being a Gonzalez.”

Puppeteers are among the most intersectional of artists: “It’s acting and comedy and storytelling and sculpture and sewing,” Hinson says. Most of the cabaret artists, she adds, juggle day jobs with their art. There are lawyers, grade school teachers, and marketing consultants performing at *NB&S*.

The cabaret will unfold in two rooms, each hosting about 30 minutes of puppet acts. “One room is more comic, the other is darker and more dramatic,” Hinson says. The hour-long show will allow audience members to take in each room. “It’s a short evening, but a very full evening,” Hinson says.

Gonzalez, who is using a pop-up book structure for parts of her performance, speaks to that fullness.

“I’ve seen people do things just with light and their hands look like *War Horse* production values,” she says. “Puppeteers make inanimate things into sentient beings. What other art form does that?”

@CateySullivan

THEATER

Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo

More than a century after its Paris premiere, *Cendrillon* comes to the Lyric.

Cendrillon, Jules Massenet’s French opera version of “Cinderella,” premiered in Paris in 1899 but is just now making its debut at Lyric Opera. What took so long? Changing taste in opera, with a turn away from frothy fairytales, for sure. But there’s also the fact that Massenet took the Western world’s most iconic story of romantic love—and made Prince Charming a soprano.

Now *Cendrillon*’s time has come. Lyric’s cast features the wonderful mezzo-soprano Alice Coote as the smitten royal youth: she knows how to manspread and has a voice like a meteor streaking across a night sky. Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg is a Disney Cinderella with real emotion. She sings some of the opera’s loveliest music in duets with another Australian, bass-baritone Derek Welton, who plays her amusingly intimidated and pathetically weak father. Mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Bishop is the story’s comic star—deliciously horrid as the stepmother with regal ambitions for her own two klutzy daughters. Coloratura soprano Marie-Eve Munger floats Massenet’s highest notes as an elegant belle epoque fairy godmother.

This archly sophisticated production, conceived and directed by Laurent Pelly, is brilliantly designed and choreographed, and as much a visual as an aural delight. In tribute to its fairytale origins, everything transpires between the pages of a storybook. Pelly designed the costumes himself, including hilariously bulbous and geometric creations for two parades of potential brides. They’re hugely entertaining the first time around; less so when they reappear in the final act. It’s a minor qualm, but those princesses could use another set of amazing frocks. —DEANNA ISAACS *CENDRILLON* Through 1/20/19: Wed 12/5, 2 PM; Sat 12/8, 7:30 PM; Fri 1/11 and Thu 1/17, 7 PM; and Sun 1/20, 2 PM, Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker, 312-827-5600, lyricopera.org, \$49-\$299.

Family matters

Familiar finds the pulsing, beating heart of a Zimbabwean-American family in Minnesota.

Multitalented playwright and actress Danai Gurira’s new play *Familiar* has a pulsing, beating heart. A deft writer

who knows when to end a scene, Gurira’s portrayal of a Zimbabwean-American family in Minnesota preparing to give away their daughter in marriage while fighting to hold onto everything they can of their culture is rich with hearty belly laughs that leaven heart-wrenching revelations.

Riotously charming, this cross-cultural sitcom is grounded by a startlingly unique American story and a stellar cast. The family dynamics will be acutely, well, familiar to viewers. Jacqueline Williams’s character hilariously struggles and fails to mediate between her two sisters, played by Ora Jones, the responsible sister who thoughtfully plans ahead, and the phenomenal Cheryl Lynn Bruce, the rebel with a twinkle in her eye, bucking conventions, gleefully shouting the unspeakable, and lighting every scene on fire with a handbag on her shoulder and love in her heart.

The word “assimilation” evokes a host of tangled emotions: pain, comfort, confusion. Director Danya Taymor exquisitely navigates this difficult terrain. Lanise Antoine Shelley and Celeste M. Cooper flourish in deliciously written roles as sisters of the younger generation, caught between a past they never knew and an unpredictable future. Cedric Young brings quiet depth to the “bumbling dad” trope. Erik Hellman and Luigi Sottile, as the fiancé and his younger brother, are heartwarming hilariously as white sheep/black sheep comedic foils and harbingers of a hopeful vision of intercultural acceptance and celebration. —SHERI FLANDERS *FAMILIAR* Through 1/13/19: Wed-Fri 7:30, Sat-Sun 3 and 7:30 PM, Tue 7:30 PM; no performances Thu 12/20 and Tue 12/25 and 1/1, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, steppenwolf.org, \$40-\$84.

Liberté, égalité, sororité

The Revolutionists is full of girl talk, 1789-style.

The main flaw in Lauren Gunderson’s *The Revolutionists* is not that it’s yet one more play about a playwright agonizing over her unwritten play but that its running gag is about how surely no one would ever want to watch a musical about the French Revolution. (Les *Misérables* was about the Paris Uprising of 1832.) But of course history does not really matter in a play that brings together four women—playwright Olympe de Gouge (Kat McDonnell), Caribbean antislavery revolutionary Marianne Angelle (Kamille Dawkins), assassin Charlotte Corday (Izis Mollinedo), and (who else?) Marie



ARTS & CULTURE

Antoinette (Sarah Goeden)—to engage in contrived dialogues about feminism, boyfriends, and which bows are the best bows (answer: teacup bows, bien sûr!). As a thought experiment about whether it's better to take action or make art, the execution can get a bit precious.

These flaws do not make for a bad evening, as Strawdog Theatre Company's production has its share of pleasures. Chief among these is a strong ensemble, directed by Denise Yvette Serna, that lends believable charisma to each character. Particularly commendable is Goeden, who, as a thoroughly magnetic Marie, relishes her notoriety and revels in the contradiction between frivolity and nobility. Leah Hummel's costumes, all frothy white, with corsets and panniers, are striking to look at against the neon lights of Alex Casillas's scenic design. But is the manifestation of these personalities enough to make up for a play that is more about itself than about revolution or these historical figures? Not really. —**IRENE HSIAO** *THE REVOLUTIONISTS* Through 12/29: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 4 PM, Strawdog Theatre Company, 1802 W. Berenice, 773-644-1380, strawdog.org, \$35, \$26 seniors.

RR Pole dancer SnowGirls puts the X back in Xmas.

The winter holidays invariably unleash a blizzard of Christmas-themed productions that range from the sentimental to the satiric. Hell in a Handbag Productions' new show *SnowGirls* fits in the latter camp—and I do mean camp. With a book by Derek Van Barham and songs by David Cerda with Scott Lamberty and Jeff Thomson, this rude, raunchy, and funny burlesque of the 1995 Paul Verhoeven movie *Showgirls* is definitely more naughty than nice.

Following fairly faithfully the plot of Joe Eszterhas's original screenplay, *SnowGirls* concerns a runaway reindeer, Snowmi Malone (Harper Leander), who hitchhikes to the North Pole in hopes of becoming a star in Santa's kingdom. "I'm a dancer, not a whore!" she insists to anyone who'll listen, as—with the aid of her costume-designer pal Jolly (Brittani Yawn)—she works her way up from (what else) Pole dancer to star of a nightclub revue. Along the way she becomes ensnared in a triangular relationship with sultry bisexual showgirl Ice Crystal Conners (Sydney Genco) and her pointy-eared elf playmate Zip (Grant Drager) and makes friends with Mrs. Claus (Erin Daly), the disenchanted wife of sleazy Santa (Terry McCarthy).

Directed and choreographed by Jon Martinez, *SnowGirls* boasts crisply timed physical humor, plentiful sight gags, and an onslaught of seasonal double entendres about "coming down the chimney" and stockings being "hung" whose obviousness is part of their rowdy charm. But the aggressive, sexy dancing is no joke. *Snowgirls* puts the X back in Xmas. —**ALBERT WILLIAMS** *SNOWGIRLS: THE MUSICAL* Through 12/30: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark, 312-409-4357, handbagproductions.org

RR Be afraid. Be very afraid. The Woman in Black is a thriller that actually thrills.

Adapted in 1987 by Stephen Mallatratt from Susan Hill's 1983 novel about a man literally haunted by the titular vengeful evil spirit, this play has been running continuously in London's West End since 1989, and it is easy to see why. The story is engaging, packed with interesting, eccentric English characters, and contains enough jump scares to keep an audience on the edge of its seat. Mal-

latratt actually tells two stories at once in his adaptation: one about the attempt to turn a man's recollections of a traumatic event into a theater piece, and the other about the traumatic memory itself.

The show is slow to get started. Mallatratt, who spent most of his writing life contributing material to British TV shows like *Coronation Street* and *The Forsyte Saga*, is overly fascinated with the process of theatricalizing words—and thinks his audience is too. Much of the early part of the show consists of a persistent actor, ably played by Adam Wesley Brown, trying to coax a stuffy old muggle (Bradley Armacost) to put a little razzle-dazzle into his rather humdrum personal account of his encounter with a ghost. But once the story gets going, it turns out to be a ripping yarn.

The small cast (another plus for a producer looking to contain expenses) provides actors with plenty of opportunities to chew the scenery. In the current production, Armacost reveals what a true chameleon he is, playing one minute a stuffy and dull accountant, the next a grizzled old codger, and a prickly local character the moment after that. This is also a show where much depends on strong lighting and sound design; Kevin Sleep (lighting) and Rod Mead (sound) do not disappoint. Every element of this fine production contributes to this stage thriller that actually thrills. —**JACK HELBIG** *THE WOMAN IN BLACK* Through 2/17/19: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2:30 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 and 7 PM, Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted, 312-988-9000, theroyalgeorgetheatre.com, \$59-\$69. 



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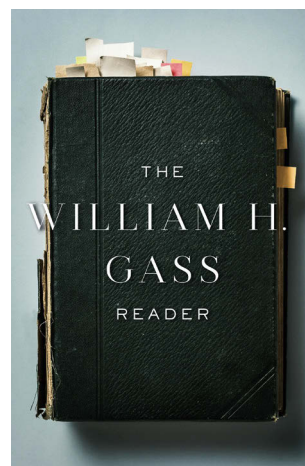
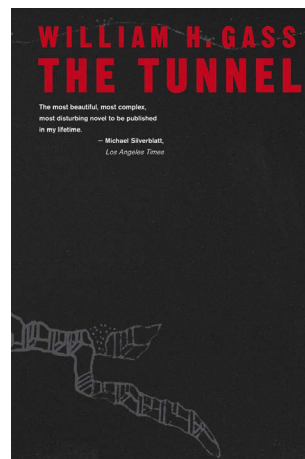
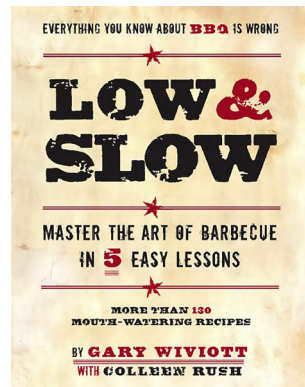
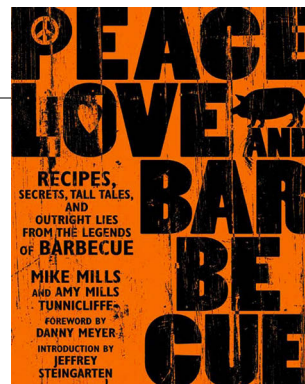
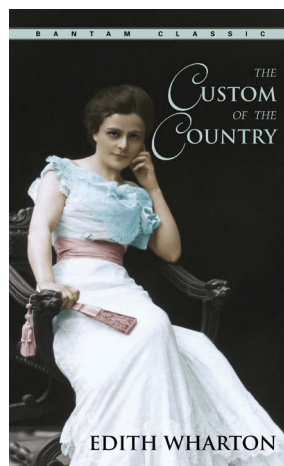
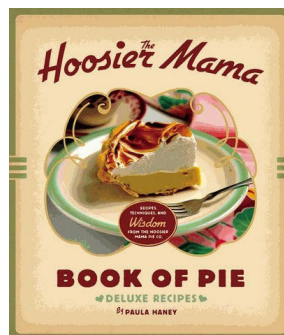
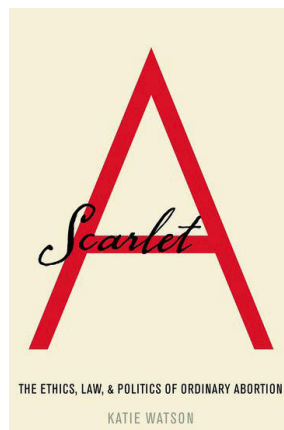
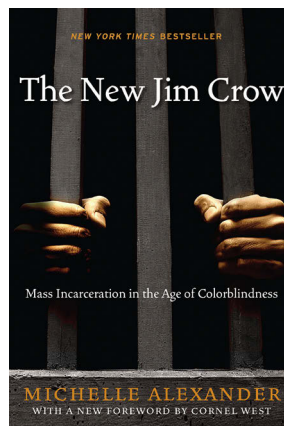
Lit (and food) recs for the politically minded Chicagoan

In Book Swap, a *Reader* staffer recommends two to five books and then asks a local word-smith, literary enthusiast, or publishing-adjacent professional to do the same. In this installment, *Reader* deputy editor Kate Schmidt swaps book suggestions with her roommate (and fiancé) Ted Cox, longtime Chicago journalist, current editor of the news site OneIllinois, and author of *1,001 Days in the Bleachers* (Northwestern), a collection of sports columns that first appeared in the *Reader*.

Kate Schmidt, *Reader* deputy editor

I was blown away by civil rights lawyer and constitutional law scholar Michelle Alexander's *THE NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLOR BLINDNESS* (The New Press). First published in 2012, it's helped inspire a bipartisan effort to reform criminal sentencing policies, but as Alexander warns in a recent *New York Times* editorial, practices being promoted now, like electronic monitoring—"e-carceration" she calls it—can just as effectively perpetuate what is currently a system of legal discrimination and segregation.

Northwestern bioethicist and lawyer Katie Watson's *SCARLET A: THE ETHICS, LAW, AND POLITICS OF ORDINARY ABORTION* (Oxford, 2018) looks at another aspect of the American berserk. At her Chicago Humanities Fest talk with the *Nation's* Katha Pollitt last month, Watson pointed out that, where abortion is common—about one in four American women have them—and 90 percent of them take place in the first trimester—something



about 60 percent of Americans think should be legal—it's the rare controversial exceptions like late-term abortions and abortions in cases of rape or incest that dominate public discussion and shape public policy.

A lot of Americans seem to prefer reality-TV reality to reality these days. One of my solaces has been pie therapy under the tutelage of *THE HOOSIER MAMA BOOK OF PIE* (Midway, 2013), a cookbook by Paula Haney of Chicago's Hoosier Mama Pie Company. The pastry chef at Evanston's Trio when Grant Achatz was first making his name, Haney brings the rigor and the digital scale of a pro to the process. Far from fancy, many of her recipes are for humble pies like buttermilk, vinegar, and sugar, or for chess pies, their fillings stretched out with cornmeal.

At the start of the summer I was asked by a friend to recommend a classic American novel, and threw a curveball at her: Edith Wharton's *THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY* (1913), a social satire of the Gilded Age that also becomes a genuine tragedy. In a 2004 review for the *Guardian's* series on old classics, the author Margaret Drabble summed it up nicely: "Not all enjoyable novels are great, and not all great novels are enjoyable. This is, supremely, both."

Ted Cox, editor, OneIllinois

You can have your pies—I'll take *PEACE, LOVE, AND BARBECUE* (Rodale, 2005), the cookbook from Mike Mills of downstate's award-winning 17th Street Barbecue. No, it hasn't replaced local barbecue maven Gary Wiviott's *LOW & SLOW* (Running Press, 2009) as my bible, but with apologies to Chicago's pit masters, the restaurant's flagship location on 17th Street in Murphysboro, down by Carbondale, has established itself as my favorite rib joint in the state.

Where neglected masterpieces are concerned, I'm haunted right now by *THE TUNNEL* (Knopf, 1995), the late William Gass's beautifully written, all-but-unreadable, 650-page novel, published after 30 years of labor. Its obsession with resentment, bigotry, neo-Nazism, and the "Party of Disappointed People" seems to have foretold the forces that propelled Donald Trump to the presidency—forces we'll be trying to tamp down for decades. I've been contemplating rereading it for years, and now it's also available excerpted in the just-out *WILLIAM H. GASS READER* (Knopf)—hint, hint for anyone in need of a Christmas gift for me.

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ARTS & CULTURE



MOVIES

Tales of old Hollywood

Ashley Cooper's "American Ego" series at Filmfront looks at movie history with fresh eyes.

By **DMITRY SAMAROV**

Ashley Cooper grew up in the 90s in Chatham and Grand Crossing but also in 40s, 50s, and 60s Hollywood. Her whole family loved movies. "My aunt's middle name is *actually* Lauren Bacall," she says. Her parents often dropped her off at her grandmother's house, where Turner Classic Movies was the preferred TV channel. She started to read up on production details and made lists of movies mentioned in books about old Hollywood to see in the future. There were no film classes in the south-side public schools she attended, so she turned to theater. Then, when teenage self-consciousness forced her off the stage, she went back to studying film, enrolling at Columbia College. For the past five years, she's been a location coordinator for Dick Wolf's *Chicago Fire*.

But she still loves old films, and she's turned that love into a series of programs called "American Ego" at Filmfront, a small storefront "cine-club" in Pilsen. I heard her introduce *Sweet Smell of Success* last month and was struck by the approachable way she talked and her obvious enthusiasm. The audience was a mix of old and young, white, brown, and black. It had nothing of the usual nostalgia or rarefied snobbery of the typical classic film presentation. There was nary a fedora in sight. Cooper was able to offer insight into the film's production in the historical period it was made while relating its themes and characters to today. She talked about the cumbersome 50s film equipment and how the shoot was done in winter, contributing to the coldness of the characters. She made a 60-year-old ➔

Ashley Cooper
by NOLIS ANDERSON

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ARTS & CULTURE

continued from 23

black-and-white movie seem as relevant as if it had been shot on an iPhone last week.

The seed of “American Ego” was planted when Cooper wanted to show Samuel Fuller’s *Shock Corridor* (1963)—a murder mystery set in a mental institution—to some acquaintances who hadn’t heard of it. Soon after, a friend took her to the Independent Programmers’ Potluck—a periodic gathering of Chicago’s microcinema operators—where she met Malia Haines-Stewart and Alan Medina of Filmfront. Filmfront’s typical programming skews more experimental, so Cooper’s idea of a series of classic Hollywood films exploring excessive ambition seemed like a good way for Haines-Stewart and Medina to offer their audience something different. *Shock Corridor* screened at the Pilsen storefront a few months later, introduced by Cooper.

Haines-Stewart and Medina started Filmfront with Medina’s brother, Rudy Medina, and his partner, Alyx Christensen, in 2015. The couple had met as film students at Sarah Lawrence College and wanted to create a space that invited lively discussion of film in Medina’s home neighborhood of Pilsen—one of many Chicago neighborhoods without a movie theater. Since opening, they have hosted a wide range of films, from showcases of local filmmaking to a screening of the 1922 German silent classic *Nosferatu* accompanied by a live improvised synthesizer soundtrack by local musicians. The through line for all their programming has been a desire to engage their community in conversation and to make what they show approachable to neophytes and obsessives alike.

They spread the word through a newsletter, social media, and word of mouth. The fact that Medina works at Cafe Jumping Bean, a Pilsen institution, doesn’t hurt. But audience members travel from as far away as Schaumburg. Cooper says the crowd for *Shock Corridor* filled the 35-to-50-seat space. I can testify that there wasn’t a spare seat to be had for *Sweet Smell of Success*. What such enthusiasm tells me is that there’s a hunger in the city for places that don’t just show movies but also try to engage their audience in substantive discussion about them. Haines-Stewart says that sometimes the talks about films the crowd disliked are even better than the ones they adored.

Filmfront has expanded some of those conversations into small-run publications printed on a Risograph printer. Their first two booklets concern film and food. Haines-Stewart and Medina are always looking for new ways



The Filmfront storefront cinema in Pilsen.

© COURTESY OF FILMFRONT



© COURTESY OF ASHLEY COOPER

to talk about movies. They were inspired in their approach by their college film professor, the late Gilberto Perez, who argued for the medium as the most accessible art form. Haines-Stewart is currently editing a collection of Perez’s writing called *The Eloquent Screen*, to be published by University of Minnesota Press next year.

One of Cooper’s inspirations for “American Ego” has been watching the unvarnished ambition with which some people in her industry go about their business. Our current political moment was another obvious touchstone. It’s difficult not to see parallels to today’s headlines watching J. J. Hunsucker (Burt Lancaster) spin facts to his advantage in *Sweet Smell of Success*. *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)—screening December 8 at Filmfront—is an almost too-timely evocation of the rise of a hollow populist buffoon, played by Andy Griffith, to the brink of world domination.

The last two films in the series, *Baby Face* (1933) and *All About Eve* (1950), focus on female ambition. Cooper remembers staying home with a cold one day and watching *Baby Face* on TMC and wondering, “Is it me or is this

movie *dirty*?” It was—it’s the story of a woman who sleeps her way from the basement to the penthouse of a New York office building—but one example of many in which film has shown her how people used to live and how often people who lived long ago are just like us.

Cooper would like to start her own microcinema/art space in the future but in the meantime wants to find as many venues as she can to host her programs once “American Ego” wraps up in February. Her mission is to spread her love of film far and wide and to inspire the next generation the way the old movies she watched at her grandma’s house inspired her. “I love [late host] Robert Osborne, but TCM could use some color.” She worries that the way classic film is presented excludes many people to whom it might appeal.

Haines-Stewart and Medina haven’t told Cooper yet, but they plan to ask her to present more movies at Filmfront in the near future. “In my eyes, she’s a film historian,” Haines-Stewart says. After talking to Cooper for an hour, I have to agree. “That’s the cool thing about film,” she says. “It has documented our history—the human experience.” **A**



MOVIES

Anna and the Apocalypse

The very idea of mashing up Disney's *High School Musical* and the cult zombie comedy *Return of the Living Dead* seems woeful and desperate, yet this Scottish production manages to be even worse than it sounds. Screenwriters Alan McDonald and Ryan McHenry must have thought they were being clever by bringing together cliches from seemingly incompatible genres; their script, however, consists of nothing but cliches, and as a result you can see every narrative development coming from a mile away. That might have been tolerable if director John McPhail hadn't struck such an insufferably smug tone—the film feels awfully impressed with itself, and for no reason other than that its makers possess the most basic awareness of modern genre film conventions. The one bright spot is the spirited cast, whose genuine good cheer ameliorates the obnoxious self-reflexivity of the writing and direction. —**BEN SACHS** *R*, 97 min. *Century 12* and *CineArts 6*, *Logan*

Back Roads

Set in a small Pennsylvania town in the mid 1990s, this lugubrious drama follows a young man (Alex Pettyfer, who also directed) tasked with raising his three younger sisters after their mother goes to prison for murdering their father. The protagonist enters into an affair with an older, married woman and becomes unhealthily attached to her, his obsession pointing to repressed feelings of shame and guilt surrounding his broken family. The film runs just over an hour and a half but feels at least twice that long; Pettyfer draws out every line of dialogue until it sinks like a stone, and the camera moves so slowly that you might wonder if cinematographer Jarin Blaschke had molasses stuck to his shoes. Still, you have to admire the filmmakers' unwavering seriousness and their refusal to render the story salacious. Tawni O'Dell adapted her 2000 novel with filmmaker Adrian Lyne. —**BEN SACHS** 101 min. *Fri 12/7, 6:30 and 8:30 PM; Sat 12/8, 4:30, 6:30, and 8:30 PM; Sun 12/9, 4:30 and 6:30 PM; Mon 12/10–Thu 12/13, 6:30 and 8:30 PM. Facets Cinematheque*

Forty Guns

Samuel Fuller's wild, wonderful, semicoherent black-and-white 'Scope western (1957) was shot in ten days, and in some ways looks it. But it's also the fea-

ture that fully announces his talent as an avant-garde filmmaker, even in this unlikely of genres. Barbara Stanwyck stars as the "woman with a whip," the land baroness of Tombstone Territory. She's assisted by the 40 dudes of the title, and Barry Sullivan is the marshal who turns up to challenge her. There's a hilarious romantic subplot involving a female gunsmith (whose sexual initiation is handled through an iris and dissolve that Godard incorporated into *Breathless*), an endless crane-and-track shot through a western town that defies belief, a lot of delirious violence, perverse sexuality, imaginative visual energy, and several startling plot twists. If you've ever wondered why Godard and other French New Wave directors deify Fuller, this movie explains it all. With Dean Jagger, John Ericson, and Gene Barry. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 2003 80 min. 35mm. *Mon 12/10, 7 PM. Music Box*

Gosford Park

This upstairs-downstairs comedy drama (2001), set in 1932 in an English country house, is probably Robert Altman's most accomplished film since the 70s. Among its virtues are the discipline exercised by its fine English cast, a good script by Julian Fellowes (based on ideas by Altman and costar Bob Balaban) that incorporates certain aspects of Agatha Christie-style whodunit, and the interesting ground rule that no guest be shown unless a servant is present in the same scene. There are more characters of interest here than in *Nashville*, and an almost constantly moving camera (less noticeably employed than in *The Long Goodbye*) tends to objectify the relationships among them. Some of the most prominent are played by Eileen Atkins, Balaban (a Hollywood producer), Alan Bates (a butler), Charles Dance, Stephen Fry (a police inspector who impersonates Jacques Tati's Mr. Hulot in garb and body language), Michael Gambon, Richard E. Grant, Tom Hollander, Derek Jacobi, Kelly Macdonald, Helen Mirren, Clive Owen, Jeremy Northam (real-life movie star and composer Ivor Novello), Kristin Scott Thomas, and Emily Watson. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 2001 137 min. *Sun 12/9, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films*

Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle

Unlike Jon Favreau's insipid 2016 live-action retread of the 1967 animated *The Jungle Book*—both casebook examples of how Disney can sanitize original source material, stripping it of vigor and meaning—this live-action adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's classic about

Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle

a feral Indian boy reared by wolves teems with flesh, blood, and mud, conveying a true sense of danger and adventure. Rohan Chand projects ferocity, vulnerability, and ingenuity in the title role, a "man cub" foundling torn between loyalty to his lupine pack and curiosity about his fellow humans. Director Andy Serkis, arguably the movie industry's top motion-capture performer, makes his anthropomorphic CGI villains darkly menacing, aided by vocal actors Benedict Cumberbatch, snapping and snarling as Mowgli's nemesis, the tiger Shere Khan, and Cate Blanchett, by turns languorous and petulant as Kaa, the goddess-like python. Reflecting the long-running controversy over Kipling's perceived endorsement of paternalism and colonial imperialism, Matthews Rhys has a fine turn as the British trophy hunter whose casual arrogance leads to the movie's violent conclusion. With Freida Pinto and the voices of Serkis, Christian Bale, Naomie Harris, Tom Hollander, and Peter Mullan. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** 104 min. *Streaming via Netflix.*

People's Republic of Desire

Documentary maker Hao Wu looks at China's live-streaming culture, profiling a couple individuals who have become celebrities by broadcasting themselves online and several fans of live-streaming programs who live in near-poverty. As with many 21st century Chinese films (both fiction and documentary), the overarching theme is the societal breakdown engendered by the nation's market reforms. Wu draws attention to the live-streamers' struggle to remain popular (they generate income based on viewers giving them gifts), revealing them to be not so different from the hard-working migrant laborers who comprise much of their audience. In this thematic emphasis, Wu points to the hollowness of a lot of Internet culture—his subjects are bound by a desire to lose themselves in a fleeting sense of fame. In Mandarin with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** 95 min. *Fri 12/7, 6:30 and 9 PM; Sat 12/8, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 12/9, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 12/10–Thu 12/13, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque*

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Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, the site of this week's Ambient Church concert celebrating 25 years of the Kranky label
MATT FRANKEL

Raise the rafters— but gently

Chicago-born label Kranky and Los Angeles-based promoter Ambient Church demonstrate the transcendent power of a house of worship—even without the worship.

By JORDAN REYES

People have made religious or otherwise sacred music for just about as long as there have been people: Jewish piyyutim, Sufi ghazals, Gnawan trance music, Gregorian chants, Zen Buddhist honkyoku, African-American gospel, Native American powwows. But some music aims for a transcendence that's unconnected to the divine. It encourages listeners to immerse themselves without telling them what they're connecting with, invites them to meditate without telling them what to think about, and asks them to be patient without telling them what if anything they're waiting for.

Making music that has nothing to say about God but can still live up to the potential of grand church architecture is a tough job, but if any label has the roster to do it, it's Kranky. Founded in Chicago in 1993 and relocated to Portland about five years ago, Kranky is celebrating its 25th anniversary by

pairing up with event programmer Ambient Church for four concerts in historic American churches, including one this Saturday in Chicago's Rockefeller Memorial Chapel.

Kranky debuted with *Prazision*, a beautifully glacial album by Virginia drone-rock trio Labradford, and since then it's maintained a focus on meticulous, entrancing sounds, sometimes understated and ghostly (Grouper's 2014 ambient piano-and-vocals record, *Ruins*) and sometimes towering and awe inspiring (Godspeed You! Black Emperor's 2000 album, *Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas to Heaven*). Much of the music under the Kranky banner evokes or facilitates secular transcendence—it rewards concentration, stillness, and the abandonment of preexisting structures and conventions. At Kranky's Ambient Church events, this should manifest itself as a reverence for sound and for the magic of people gathering as quiet witnesses to creative expression.

“Churches are the ultimate acoustic architectural entity,” says Ambient Church founder Brian Sweeny. “They’re built for acoustics, beauty, and transcendence for the listener.” In 2016, when Sweeny lived in New York, he visited Brooklyn’s progressive Park Church Co-op for a concert of ambient music presented by a friend, with a backdrop of dancing projected visuals. “The environment could not have been better,” he says.

Spurred by that epiphany, Sweeny created Ambient Church that same year, organizing events not just at the Park Church Co-op but also at the First Unitarian Congregational Society and the secular Knockdown Center, booking artists such as synthesist supreme Suzanne Ciani (famous for her mastery of quadraphonic sound), Krautrock godfather Hans-Joachim Roedelius (best known from the canonical projects Cluster and Harmonia), and ambient vocalist Julianna Barwick. He moved to Los Angeles in June 2018, where he’s continued programming at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

Churches are particularly suited for ambient music—they instill silence. In Sweeny’s opinion, a club or venue built into a bar simply isn’t appropriate for the artists he promotes; thus, churches. “And they’re everywhere!” he says. “They’re in every city, and they’re frequently not occupied. Every evening these places are open—sometimes hundreds in one city. You have this underserved genre world, and the possibilities from this amazing resource. Those things can meet up.”

Ambient Church hopes to introduce ambient music to people outside its niche audience, since the music itself isn’t especially outgoing. “The dedicated ambient listenership isn’t huge,” Sweeny says, “so why not make it an audiovisual experience with which anyone can get on board?” Even the name and premise of his operation are designed to entice. “If you tell someone you’re going to a church to see a show,” he says, “as long as they’re adventurous, they will immediately start asking more questions. I’ve been invited to church shows many times, and I’m always curious.”

Kranky is a perfect partner in this endeavor: most of the label’s more than 200 titles seem designed to blossom when treated to the kind of focused, fully engaged attention Sweeny wants to encourage (often called “active listening” for short). Kranky cofounder Joel Leoschke, who’s led the label himself for more than a decade (the other founder, Bruce Adams, sold his share of the operation in 2005), prefers to direct his discipline and enthusiasm toward the fundamentals of the business—manufacturing, releasing, and distributing records, then making sure royalties get paid on time. “From my view, it’s a practical matter,” he says. “We are a label. We don’t book shows.” He appreciates Sweeny’s affinity for nontraditional venues, and he’s happy to let someone else take care of presenting and promoting events.

Leoschke takes a no-nonsense approach to Kranky—the label once ran an ad saying “heads down, blinders on”—and this practice of stripping away superfluties dovetails with his devotion to active listening. It’s been important to his life and work, he says, and it can unlock new details even on a recording he’s listened to casually ten times. He had his first active-listening experiences when he engaged with records on headphones because his roommates or his parents needed quiet, or when he went to shows where audiences were expected to be respectfully attentive. “I think active listening is best when you empty your mind,” he says, “and it can actually help encourage that.”

Pan-American, aka Mark Nelson



Windy & Carl © CHRISTOPHER JACKSON

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For Kranky’s quieter acts especially, Leoschke recognizes, a church may be a more suitable environment than a typical rock club. “I certainly prefer an alternative to the typical live-music venue where people tend to talk during performances and noise from a bar can be intrusive,” he says. “It’s one thing if an artist can bury those issues with volume, but if they are playing quietly, it’s much more conducive to active listening to be in a space that suggests to attendees that they should be in a quieter, more meditative state.”

Brian Foote, who helps Leoschke keep Kranky ticking, relocated to Chicago from Portland, Oregon, around the time

Justin Walter © DOUG COOMBE



Steve Hauschildt © MARIA TZEKA

cofounder Bruce Adams divested himself of his share of the label. While Foote was living in Portland, he’d released recordings through Kranky by his bands Nudge and Fontanelle. “I had been a fan of Kranky in real time since Labradford’s *A Stable Reference*,” he says. “I moved to Chicago, and Bruce asked me if I wanted a job. I thought he was joking, just because if you go on the website, it still says under frequently asked questions, ‘Can I have a job? No.’ Then after I had been working there for about a month, Bruce took me out to lunch as he was training me. I told him how happy I was to be working with him and how much I was looking forward to learn from him, and he was like, ‘Well, actually, I’m out of here.’”

Though that was disappointing to Foote, it’s also the reason he’s been working at Kranky for 13 years—Adams had handled publicity and promotion, and now they’re among Foote’s duties. He also books special events, including Kranky’s 20th-anniversary gigs in 2013 and the current Ambient Church concerts. “I had the idea to do something for the 25th,” he says. “Joel is never one to honk his own horn.”

Foote has known Sweeny since 2010, when a previous Sweeny operation, Vibes Management, hired a Kranky artist ➔

continued from 27

for a party. “When he started Ambient Church, he ended up booking a Kranky artist on almost every bill,” Foote says. “So it seemed like a natural choice.” Foote has lived in Los Angeles since 2007, and after Sweeny moved there this past summer, they quickly began planning Ambient Church shows for Kranky artists in Portland, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

“It’s not unusual for artists on our roster to say they’d rather not play a rock club,” Foote says, “but Ambient Church drives at transcendence—to evoke something beyond. The architecture. The acoustics. The scale of it. The reverence of being in it and being quiet. Then you add the music and visuals of the series, and you can see that everything is moving towards that.”

The lineup for each Kranky anniversary celebration is unique, showcasing the label’s diversity as well as its cohesive vision. The bill at Rockefeller features two Chicagoans—Steve Hauschildt, previously of Cleveland psychedelic electronic trio Emeralds, and Pan•American, aka former Labradford guitarist Mark Nelson—and two Michigan acts, Ann Arbor-based experimental trumpeter and composer Justin Walter and Dearborn ambient husband-and-wife duo Windy & Carl.

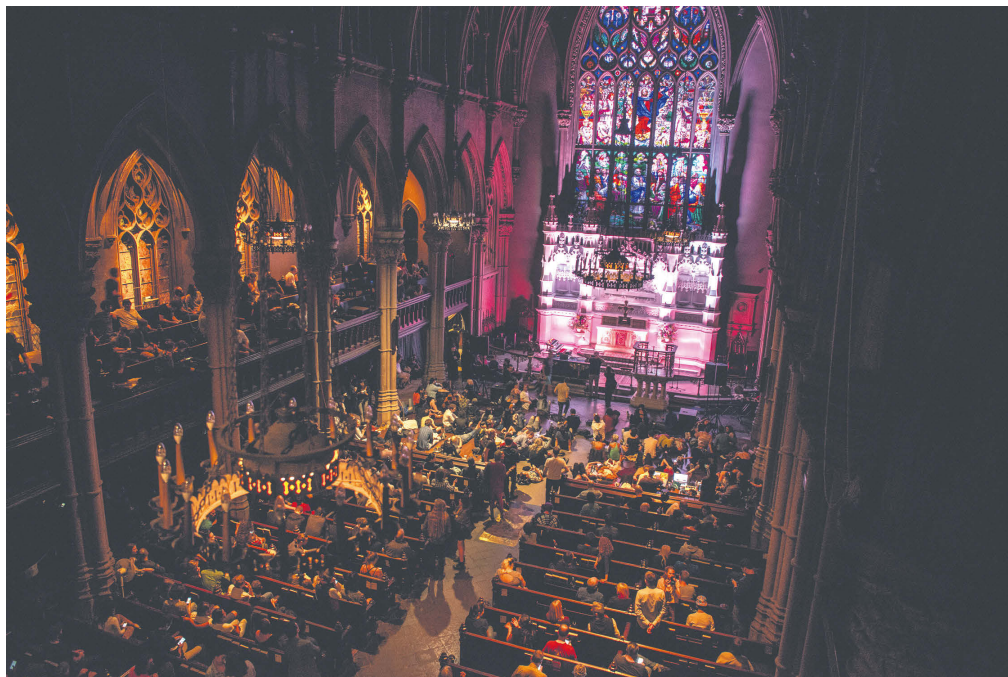
The Kranky catalog is peppered with Nelson’s work in Labradford, Pan•American, and Anjou, going all the way back to 1993. “It seemed like a much smaller world then,” he says. In the early 90s, he reflects, a band could make 500 copies of a seven-inch and reasonably expect it to get to the right radio stations and distributors. He’s happy to be celebrating his long history with the label in a house of worship. “Churches are so critical to public life for me,” he says. “The idea that there’s a place where the door is always open, and it’s dedicated to contemplation and refuge, is incredibly powerful and meaningful to me. I know there is plenty of difficult context for many, but I still think it’s possible for a church to be a place of peace, sanctuary, and acceptance.”

Nelson also sees transcendence as a vital part of his artistic mission. “Music is not ‘self-expression’ to me. It’s a gesture outside of myself—a prayer for connection and community,” he explains. “Music has given me the comfort of feeling less isolated and alone my whole life. All I hope for my music is that it serves someone in the way that so much music has served me. That it allows a space to open in someone’s heart. That’s the only point, really.”

Hauschildt is used to people calling his music “transcendent,” but he’d prefer they find other words. “I don’t have any intention to relay transcendence,” he says. “I think that’s partially because I see it as a manifestation from the new age music tradition, which I’ve tried to divorce myself from—but that’s a personal stance. It’s easy for me to be frustrated by music being understood in a one-dimensional way. If you listen to the music of Arvo Pärt, it’s clearly transcendent, but there are still avenues to appreciate it outside of that one notion. Music that operates that way has other qualities that would make it beautiful anyway.”

The practice of playing in churches does appeal to Hauschildt, though—the architecture can enrich the experience, he says, and chapels with high ceilings naturally amplify reverb. He jokes that pews are just uncomfortable enough to keep an audience awake and paying attention.

Walter has warmer feelings about churches—they’ve been a significant influence on his creative process and sound. “When



An Ambient Church concert with Robert Rich, celebrating the 2018 autumnal equinox at Saint Ann & the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn
JULIA DRUMMOND

I was in Brooklyn, I was living kitty-corner to an abandoned church,” he says. “The church was sold, and a promoter was able to get access to the grounds. I remember taking my stuff, setting up some speakers with 50-foot cables, improvising, and exploring sounds in that space.” Since then, he’s released two full-lengths on Kranky—his newest, last year’s *Unseen Forces*, is built from layers of a breath-actuated synthesizer called an Electronic Valve Instrument, sometimes augmented by piano and trumpet. He recently acquired and refurbished a 1930s pump organ, whose sounds will appear in his Rockefeller set.

Transcendence doesn’t come up much when Walter talks about his work, but he understands how important immersion can be for a listener who wants to get as much as possible out of it. “I think music should have meaning and a message,” he says. “Maybe a long time after working on a piece or a record, you can get to the point where you put it on and you listen to the whole thing—it takes you somewhere else. A story was told because there was time taken to figure out what the story was.”

Windy Weber and her husband, Carl Hultgren, are much more direct about the role of transcendence in their music, both when they write it and when they play it. “The high we get from a great performance is something that no drugs or alcohol or sex can come close to,” Weber says. “That experience of connecting to the universe and expressing something there are few words for is so amazing. It is physical and emotional and out of body, and we have only ever been able to do that together. So we work together, knowing how amazing the result can be.”

Windy & Carl began their collaboration the same year Kranky launched, though they didn’t join its roster until the release of their 1998 double LP, *Depths*, which Weber jokingly calls their Spacemen 3 record because they each wrote their own songs. (The comparison is an exaggeration, thankfully: Peter Dinklage and Jason Pierce of Spacemen 3 eventually became so estranged that they’d record their parts individually to avoid interacting.) Windy & Carl also like the idea of playing in a church, but not because it’s a hallowed space—for them it has more to do with Dr. Teeth & the Electric Mayhem. “Our favorite movie is *The Muppet Movie*,” Weber says. “It was for each of us before we ever knew each other. And in *The*

Muppet Movie the band plays in a church.” The Muppet combo even uses some of the same gear as Windy & Carl. “They actually have a Gibson Les Paul, a Fender Twin amp, and a Roland Space Echo, honestly!”

Foote believes that transcendence in music can transport people as well as bring them together. “Music can make anything you do be more extreme,” he says. “It can imprint your experience to an immediate and visceral thing. If you are truly experiencing a music that you enjoy, it helps you get there. Ten times so, if it’s music already evocative of that for you. It’s similar to a religious church experience—it’s all of those things combined with the fact that it’s shared. Here you are, feeling this and sitting quietly with other people.” Stillness is rare, shared stillness even rarer. That’s part of what gives them their power to pacify and heal.

Kranky’s music has allowed me to feel this personally, and I can illustrate how with stories from 2013 alone. In January of that year, I drove to Detroit with a friend to see a show by Jeff Mangum of Neutral Milk Hotel. On the way, I got a call that a childhood friend had hanged himself—a terrible shock, and not just because he was young and brilliant. That night, as I huddled on a deflating mattress in a cold, decrepit house, my traveling companion snored like a foghorn. I was miserable and I was in mourning. I’d rarely felt so alone, and I didn’t think I’d ever be able to sleep. I dug through my beat-up satchel for my iPod, hoping to at least mitigate the noise. I queued up Stars of the Lid’s *And Their Refinement of the Decline*, a 2007 Kranky release, and it took me far away from the painful day.

I closed out 2013 by quitting drinking, ending a problematic relationship with alcohol. Suddenly I had newfound hours in my schedule, and I spent my evenings devouring books and listening to expansive, largely instrumental records. Many of them were Kranky titles—Stars of the Lid’s *The Tired Sounds of Stars of the Lid* and Tim Hecker’s *Ravedeath, 1972* were serene and sublime, inspiring me to keep the dark fog of my old life at my back. A church can deliver those feelings, but if you’ve got the right music, you don’t need one. 

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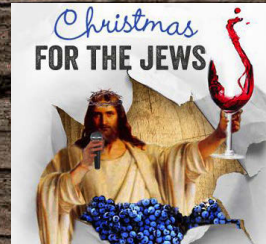
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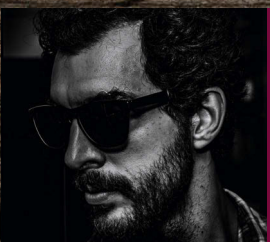
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FEAT.
TRACY NELSON



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PICK OF THE WEEK

The Internet put a friendly foot forward on *Hive Mind*

THE INTERNET, MOONCHILD

Mon 12/10, 7:30 PM, House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn, sold out.

RENELL MEDRANO

THE INTERNET EMERGED emerged from the Odd Future collective in 2011, and with their R&B sound and charisma, they've effectively stood out among more than a dozen projects associated with the volatile hip-hop group. Much of the credit for their recent evolution goes to songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer Steve Lacy, who joined the Internet as a guitarist and vocalist in 2013, when they began working on *Ego Death* (which came out in 2015), bringing a refined ingenuity as co-executive producer. Lacy asserts himself even more on their fourth album, July's *Hive Mind* (Columbia), sharing vocal duties with front woman Syd (formerly Syd tha Kyd)

on a handful of songs. But despite Lacy's increasing presence, the Internet still feel tethered to Syd; the lush, lived-in new record owes its amiably low-key magnetism to her. Syd's tranquil, masterful flow on the skeletal rap percussion and cool R&B ambience of "Next Time/Humble Pie" helps make the Internet come across as a group of people who'd be down to split pizza with fans, no matter how large their name may appear on the poster for any major festival. Though they've reached the level of success where many groups choose to seek power in physical distance from the audience, the Internet know a friendly touch can go a long way. —LEOR GALIL



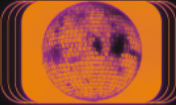
93Feetofsmoke COURTESY THE ARTIST

THURSDAY6

93FEETOFSMOKE *Shinigami* headlines; *Familypet*, 93Feetofsmoke, and *Dying in Designer* open. 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$10. 17+

I'm not sure who, if anyone, will end up filling the Lil Peep-size hole in rap, but there are an awful lot of white rappers cribbing from third-wave emo's salad days who seem like they'd love to do just that. Tonight's show features artists who've made a home in similar frameworks as Peep, though such comparisons alone would shortchange opener 93Feetofsmoke. The 25-year-old Virginia native played bass in several metal bands, but once he got a copy of Ableton, he freed himself from the challenges of playing with others and started making beats and experimenting with Auto-Tune. Over the past few years he's littered the Internet with singles, some of which he helpfully repackaged in 2016 and 2017 as end-of-the-year compilations. On the surface, 93Feet offers up the emo-focused essence of a genre that's been described as "Soundcloud rap"; for example, he samples American Football's "Honestly?" and dispenses Auto-Tune raps about the queasiness that comes with youthful vulnerability on 2*k16 Pack*'s "I Wanna Be the Picture on Ur Home-screen" with a flow that feels like his words are just dripping out of his mouth. But on October's *Bummer* (Plzgoaway), 93Feet shows promise of breaking out of Soundcloud rap's confines with focused, evocative, and genuine melodies that show his expert grasp of the scene's melodramatic formula while slyly shining a light beyond its borders; his blurry bars on "This Is Do or Die Just Like Everything Else" are sopping with the R&B longing that's de rigueur in more accessible and mainstream strains of rap. —LEOR GALIL ➔

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FT. MICHAEL SHANNON
AS LOU REED
FUN HOUSE / WINGTIPS
JAN 12 / 8PM / 18+

ON SALE FRIDAY!
LENNON STELLA
THU MAR 28
7:30PM / ALL AGES



ON SALE FRIDAY!
BROODS
WED APR 10
9PM / 18+



FRIDAY DEC 7 / 8PM / ALL AGES
OMAR APOLLO
MANWOLVES / ROLE MODEL
KENNY HOOPLA

SATURDAY DEC 8 / 8:30PM / 18+
101WKQX welcomes
EVE 6
PARTY NAILS / SOMME

THURSDAY DEC 13 / 8PM / 18+
Metro & Half Acre present:
On the Floor featuring
DOS SANTOS
RESA VOIR / DJ RAE CHARDONNAY

FRIDAY DEC 14 / 9PM / 18+
GANG OF YOUTHS
GRETTA RAY

SATURDAY DEC 15 / 8PM / ALL AGES
POST ANIMAL
PAUL CHERRY / DIVINO NIÑO

SATURDAY DEC 22 / 7PM / ALL AGES
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'SCARY MONSTERS' + OTHER
BOWIE HITS & DEEP CUTS
FUN HOUSE / WINGTIPS
FT. MICHAEL SHANNON AS LOU REED

THURSDAY JAN 17 / 9PM / 18+
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SUNDAY JAN 20 / 5PM / 21+
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01/22 HIGH ON FIRE
01/23 STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS
01/25 THE LEMON TWIGS
01/26 THE MAGPIE SALUTE
02/15 MAGIC GIANT
02/16 CHELSEA CUTLER
02/21 YUNG GRAVY
02/22 BOB MOULD BAND
02/23 BOB MOULD BAND
03/01 AURORA



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FRI DEC 14

THURSDAY DEC 6
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FRIDAY DEC 7
Holiday Toy Drive with
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SATURDAY DEC 8
Manifest welcomes
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ZOOEY GLASS

SUNDAY DEC 9
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12.06

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SLEEP ON IT / SMALL TALKS

RIOT FEST PRESENTS

12.07

TROPHY EYES / SEAWAY

MICROWAVE / CAN'T SWIM
HOT MULLIGAN

12.09

BROTHER ALI

DEM ATLAS

REACT PRESENTS

12.12

ROOSEVELT

4TH ANNUAL WAR ON X-MAS: SHAMELESS CAPITALISM

12.13

THE LAWRENCE ARMS

A WILHELM SCREAM
CANADIAN RIFLE

12.16

THE HOMECOMING

FUN MONKEY / DIVISIONPOINT
RIP TOM DAD HAT

RIOT FEST PRESENTS

12.19

NOTHING, NOWHERE

WICCA PHASE SPRINGS ETERNAL
SMRTDEATH / ST. PANTHER

12.21

VEIL OF MAYA

VCTMS / EL FAMOUS / DEVILLE
THE LEVITATED

RIOT FEST PRESENTS

12.22

KNUCKLE PUCK

HOMESAFE / HEART ATTACK MAN / LURK

12.27

EVERY AVENUE

12.29

EMO NIGHT BROOKLYN

KICKSTAND PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

12.31

GUIDED BY VOICES

01.04

HOME BURIAL

PEACH BUNNY / DEAD HUMMINGBIRD
MT. POCONO

SILVER WRAPPER PRESENTS

01.25

BILLY STRINGS

01.26

GNASH

MALLRAT / GUARDIN

02.01

MIKE STUD

02.02

DOROTHY

SPIRIT ANIMAL

02.07

BRASSTRACKS

02.09

CORROSION OF CONFORMITY

CROWBAR / WEEDEATER
MOTHERSHIP

02.10

BAS

REXX LIFE RAJ / INNET JAMES
CORREY C

02.12

TONIGHT ALIVE

I THE MIGHTY / DOLL SKIN

SILVER WRAPPER PRESENTS

02.15

BLEEP BLOP

KICKSTAND PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

02.23

CHERRY GLAZERR

PALEHOUND

03.02

YOU ME AT SIX

DREAMERS

03.14

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 8PM

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 8PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9 4 & 7PM

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FRIDAY, JANUARY 11 8PM

Isabella Rossellini

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12 8PM

William Fitzsimmons

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13 7PM

Kathy Mattea

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20 10:30AM

Justin Roberts &
The Not Ready for
Naptime Players

Family
concert

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24 8PM

Sammy Miller and
The Congregation

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31 7PM

Kasey Chambers

Campfire Tour USA 2019 • with guest Carly Burruss

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1 8PM

Dead Horses

with special guest The Brother Brothers
In Szold Hall

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2 8PM

Declan O'Rourke

Chronicles of the Great Irish Famine • In Szold Hall

FOR OUR FULL CONCERT SCHEDULE, VISIT
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MUSIC

continued from 30

TRAVIS SCOTT *Trippie Red, Gunna, and Sheck Wes open. 7:30 PM, United Center, 1901 W. Madison, \$69.95.*

About a year ago, former president Barack Obama included “Butterfly Effect” by Travis Scott on a list of his favorite songs of 2017. It’s crazy to think back to a time when we had a president who—along with not being the worst person to walk the earth—had really good taste in music and culture. It’s also amazing to consider how much time and work was put into Scott’s third official studio album, August’s *Astroworld*. The May 2017 release of the beautifully woozy “Butterfly Effect” (effectively the album’s lead single) launched 15 straight months of hype and rabid, anxious speculation that *Astroworld* could drop at any time. And when the album finally saw the light of day, it was clear from its spaced-out opening track, “Stargazing,” that it was well worth the wait. In an era of mainstream hip-hop albums engineered to rake in high numbers of digital streams, something this cohesive and conceptual had been practically unheard of since the pre-MAGA glory days of Kanye West. A seamless flow of glittery psychedelia, prog-rock indulgence, druggy atmospheres, and topsy-turvy rap-sing wordplay by the smooth-as-hell Scott (plus a boatload of guests, including Drake, Migos, Juice Wrlrd, Swae Lee, the Weeknd, and Frank Ocean), *Astroworld* brilliantly summons a distinctive cosmic energy and builds a hazy world that completely consumes the listener. Whether it’s the three-part smasher “Sicko Mode” or the dreamy darkness of “Can’t Say,” each track is heavy, lush, and sweeping. *Astroworld* is a next-level feat of artistry and meticulous craftsmanship for Scott and his all-star team of producers, as well as the undisputed record of the year. Scott is also a force live, trading in the trippy introspection for full-on punk-rock fury as he tears the stage up and screams his head off like a man possessed. —LUCA CIMARUSTI



Richard Thompson  COURTESY THE ARTIST

doom purveyors Rezn (whose recent LP, *Calm Black Water*, is mind-melting in the most beautiful way), brutal crossover outfit Whut?, and shape-shifting death-metal four-piece Immortal Bird. Saturday’s roster was booked by Los Angeles-based label Prosthetic Records, which has been mining Chicago artists for years. It begins with Meth., who specialize in deranged hybrids of grind, powerviolence, and black metal. They’re followed by the dreamy atmospheric metal of Varaha, before Zaius crank the intensity back up with their instrumental post-metal. Huntsman color their doom with elements of classic rock and folk, while experimentalists Without Waves merge metal, jazz, hardcore, prog, and apparently whatever else they feel like. Headlining are the Atlas Moth, whose most recent album, February’s *Coma Noir*, is one of the best heavy releases to come out of Chicago (or anywhere else) in 2018. Bring your earplugs and prepare to get slayed. —JAMIE LUDWIG

RICHARD THOMPSON ELECTRIC TRIO See also Saturday. Logan Ledger opens. 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$35-\$150. sold out. 17+

Fifty years have passed since Fairport Convention released their self-titled first album, a charmingly eclectic mishmash of earnest pop tunes and American singer-songwriter covers enlivened by an astonishingly dexterous teenage guitarist named Richard Thompson. Over the next few years, Fairport evolved into the flagship band of English folk rock, and their guitarist forged his disparate influences—first-generation rock ‘n’ roll, Scottish bagpipe tunes, modal improvisations pioneered by John Coltrane—into an instantly recognizable instrumental voice. After leaving Fairport in 1971, he recorded six albums with his wife, singer Linda Thompson, over the next decade, which established him as a nonpareil songwriter equally at home with black humor and spiritually infused romantic longing. Since splitting with Linda in 1983, Thompson has turned his bottomless bag of great songs, astounding licks, and dry, sidesplitting repartee into one of the most reliable live shows in rock ‘n’ roll. The protagonists of the songs on September’s *13 Rivers* (New West) are driven by a sense that their clocks are running out, while they’re bluffing their way through personal doubt and

32 CHICAGO READER • DECEMBER 6, 2018

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES BY PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



dwain story

WRITING ABOUT UNDERAPPRECIATED FOLK GENIUS DWAIN STORY REQUIRED DETECTIVE WORK, BUT HIS FRIENDS CHRIS FARRELL, AARON COOPER, AND RICHARD KRUEGER HELPED ME GET THE STORY ON STORY. HE WAS BORN IN SOMERSET, KENTUCKY, ON FEB. 1, 1942, BUT WHEN HIS MOTHER COULDN'T AFFORD TO RAISE HIM ALONE, HE WAS SENT TO A CHILD-RENS HOME IN CINCINNATI, WHERE HE LIVED TO AGE 14. HE WAS INSPIRED BY SEEING COUNTRY STARS LIKE TEX RITTER AND RENO & SMILEY ON TV, AND IN 1962, AFTER HE DROPPED OUT OF OBERLIN COLLEGE, HE AND FORMER CLASSMATES ERIK JACOBSEN & PETE CHILDS FORMED FOLKY BLUE GRASS TRIO THE KNOB LICK UPPER 10,000. THEY WERE MANAGED BY THE LEGENDARY ALBERT GROSSMAN (BOB DYLAN, JAMES JOPLIN) AND PLAYED GREENWICH VILLAGE CLUBS & EVEN CARNEGIE HALL. THEY RELEASED 2 ALBUMS ON MERCURY IN '63, "THE INTRODUCTION OF KNOB LICK UPPER 10,000" AND "WORK-OUT!!!". BUT THE NEXT YEAR JACOBSEN BROKE UP THE BAND TO BECOME A PRODUCER—ON STORY'S ONLY PROPER SOLO RELEASE, THE 1965 SINGLE "A LITTLE LOVIN'." HE'S BACKED BY ONE

OF JACOBSEN'S CLIENTS, THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL. (HE LATER SELF-RELEASED CASSETTES & CDS, BUT EVIDENCE OF THEM IS SCARCE.) STORY STAYED ON THE NY SCENE FOR A FEW YEARS, EVEN ROOMING WITH PHIL OCHS, AND IN THE EARLY 70S HE SETTLED IN CHICAGO, GIGGING AT THE QUIET KNIGHT & THE EARL OF OLD TOWN. HIS ALMOST-FAMOUS TUNE "WENDIGO" WAS COVERED BY THE LIKES OF MARY MCCASLIN, JIM POST, & DOC & MERLE WATSON, WHILE HIS "CROSSPICKING" GUITAR STYLE, WHICH FARRELL DESCRIBES AS "A SOUND SIMILAR TO FAST FINGER-PICKING OR BANJO ROLLS," WON HIM FANS AS RENOWNED AS RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT. UNFORTUNATELY STORY STRUGGLED WITH BIPOLAR DISORDER, AND DESPITE SUPPORTIVE FRIENDS HE WAS OFTEN INSTITUTIONALIZED OR HOMELESS, ESPECIALLY BEFORE HE WAS DIAGNOSED IN THE 80S. HE ENDED UP AT CONTINENTAL NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER ON WESTERN AVE., WHERE HE ENTERTAINED FELLOW RESIDENTS TILL HE LOST HIS VOICE. STORY SUCCEEDED TO CANCER ON OCTOBER 29, 2018. —BIG THANKS TO RICHARD K. CHRIST AND AARON C.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC" ON "OUTSIDE THE LOOP" ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. COMMENTS, IDEAS TO plasticc@hotmail.com ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDETHELOOPRADIO.COM

dysfunctional relationships. But Thompson's fiery playing and the slickly assertive backing from his long-standing Electric Trio turn bummers into defiantly rollicking blowouts. —BILL MEYER

XIBALBA ITZAES *Unholy Lust, Tombstoners, and Impure open.* 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 235 N. Ashland, \$20. 17+

Mexico City black-metal band Xibalba Itzaes started out in the early 90s. The word *xibalba* means "the place of fear," or the underworld, in Mayan culture, and like their contemporaries Brujeria, they take the occult cosmology of traditional Mexican magic as their foundation, but they also delve deep into indigenous spiritual history. Xibalba Itzaes released

one brilliant full-length, *Ah Dzam Poop Ek* (which has lyrics in English and Latin), in 1994, and despite sporadically released limited-edition splits and singles throughout the next two decades, the group went dormant enough for two bands (one from California, the other from Baltimore) to snag the name Xibalba for themselves. The new *Ah Tza Xibalba Itzaes* is the first full-length from Xibalba Itzaes in nearly a quarter century. It's razor sharp and incisive, and though its sound is still rooted in Mayan iconography, the band mixes a Scandinavian feel into their blasting. Though indigenous metal musicians drawing on indigenous themes have soldiered on in younger up-and-coming bands such as Mexico's Tezcatlipoca (Aztec metal with lyrics in Nahuatl), it's so good to have these progenitors back in force again. —MONICA KENDRICK

THALIA HALL

DEC 13



WILLIAM ELLIOTT WHITMORE

DEC 14



CLOUD NOTHINGS

JAN 17



JEN KIRKMAN

MAR 01



RHEA BUTCHER

MAR 23



JUSTIN WILLMAN

APR 08



ANDREA GIBSON

DEC 06

PREOCCUPATIONS AND PROTOMARTYR

DEC 15

THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES FOR KIDS

JAN 15

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO

DEC 07-08

RICHARD THOMPSON ELECTRIC TRIO

DEC 15-16

BOMBA ESTEREO

JAN 18

REBIRTH BRASS BAND

DEC 09

THE MUSIC OF WILCO FOR KIDS

DEC 20

CAT POWER

JAN 19

MICHELLE WOLF

DEC 09

LUCHA LIBRE GALLI

DEC 29-31

NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH NONAME

JAN 23

DALEY AND JMSN

DEC 12

THE OH HELLOS CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

DEC 12

14TH ANNUAL BARN DANCE APOCALYPSE

JAN 24

THE SOFT MOON

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DEC 08



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DEC 09



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DEC 09



TERISA GRIFFIN & MARY GRIFFIN

DEC 13



TOBE NWIGWE

DEC 14



FUNKADESI 22ND ANNIVERSARY

DEC 22



POCKET SCIENCE SUPERGROUP

DEC 06

WHPK 88.5 FM PRESENTS IGLOOHOST

DEC 10

MECCA MONDAY FEATURING BLAKE RED

DEC 15

THE CHIC-A-GO-GO XMAS SPECIAL

DEC 07

SLUMBA PARTY

DEC 11

THE MOTH

DEC 15

FFTL HOLIDAY CHORAL JUBILEE

DEC 08

INTONATION WINTER SHOWCASE FEATURING TASHA

DEC 14

YOU GO GIRL II HOSTED BY THANK YOU CHICAGO!!!

DEC 15

RHYTHM & BOOZE 7: NAUGHTY OR NICE

DEC 08

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DEC 15

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DECEMBER 9	HEISENBERG UNCERTAINTY PLAYERS 8PM
DECEMBER 10	RC BIG BAND 7PM JON RARICK NONET 9PM
DECEMBER 11	FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM
DECEMBER 12	ELIZABETH'S CRAZY LITTLE THING 9PM
DECEMBER 13	FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM
DECEMBER 14	UNIBROW
DECEMBER 15	LOCKOUT
DECEMBER 16	TONY DO ROSARIO GROUP
DECEMBER 17	RC BIG BAND 7PM PROSPECT FOUR 9PM
DECEMBER 19	WAGNER & MORSE
DECEMBER 20	MIKE FELTEN
DECEMBER 21	Z28
DECEMBER 22	MURDER CITY SAINTS THE ACOUSTICPUNKS MAYA KEYSTAR JOHN GREENFIELD

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"A Musical Gem" - NY Times



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FRI 7

CLUB CLOSED FOR A PRIVATE EVENT
 In The SideBar - Jenny Bienemann & Friends

SAT 8

Solo Show
MIKE COOLEY
 Of Drive By Truckers



WDCB Big Band Sundays - Open Mic Every Tuesday

TUE 11

Storytelling and Song
VOICEBOX
 feat. CATHY RICHARDSON

WED 12

BIG BAND DANCE PARTY
 In The SideBar - Jarod Bufe Quartet

THU 13

EXPOSURE Local Music Showcase
 Sails - The Get - Toy Robots
 In The SideBar - The Webstirs

FRI 14

Original Band Members!
OFF BROADWAY
 plus Phil Angotti Band
 SideBar - TISH HINOJOSA CD RELEASE SHOW

SAT 15

BRAVE COMBO
 Holiday Spectacular!
 In The SideBar - Ralph Covert



12/17 - "It's A Wonderful Life" Pop-Up Movie Night (SOLD OUT)
 12/20 - Country Night In Berwyn Holiday Roundup
 12/21 - The Redmonds Christmas Show
 12/22 - Ronnie Baker Brooks
 12/26 - "It's A Wonderful Life" Pop-Up Movie Night (SOLD OUT)
 12/28 - Terrapin Flyer
 12/29 - Webb Wilder & The Beatnecks
 12/31 - NEW YEAR'S EVE with Expo '76 (Club)
 The Heavy Sounds in the Booker T & The MG's Spirit (SideBar)



Dec 06



Minnesota
 CharlesTheFirst

Dec 08



K?D

Dec 13



Coone

Dec 14



Slander
 Gammer, Wavedash

Dec 15



Slander
 Gammer, Wavedash

Dec 21



The Floozies
 Mersiv

Dec 22



The Floozies
 SoDown

Dec 29



Green Velvet
 Solardo

Dec 30



What So Not
 Slumberjack

Dec 31



**Space Jesus
 NYE**

Jan 12



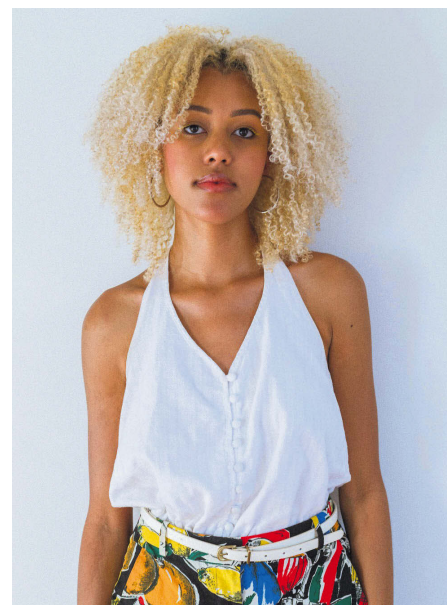
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MUSIC

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Aaliyah Allah  ANNA CLAIRE BARLOW

continued from 33

SATURDAYS

AMBIENT CHURCH CHICAGO: 25 YEARS OF KRANKY 7 PM, *Windy & Carl* headline; *Steve Hauschildt, Pan-American, and Justin Walter* open. *Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, 5850 S. Woodlawn, \$25-\$30.* 

The drifting, beatless songs and subtly abraded electronic textures of Labradford's 1993 LP *Prazision* were a shot across the bow of corporate grunge, indie rock, and pretty much everything else going on in music that year. The album, which was the first release from Kranky, also predicted a future in which musicians would be free to draw upon a much wider array of sounds and stylistic templates. Though the Chicago-born label would come to be strongly associated with ambient and atmospheric music, it never locked into a particular sound. And over the past quarter of a century, it's sustained relationships with some of the earliest recording artists on its roster while constantly adding new ones. Though Kranky relocated its headquarters to the west coast five years ago, Chicago has been selected by Ambient Church—an organization that sponsors music and light shows in venues more exalted than the average bar—along with New York, Portland, and Los Angeles to take part in the label's 25th-anniversary celebration. All of the performers at this weekend's shows at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel are midwesterners with strong Kranky connections. Ann Arbor-based Justin Walter has played trumpet with the Afrobeat combo Nomo and electronics with Colin Stetson. On *Unseen Forces*, his most recent LP for Kranky, he layers brass, keyboards, and a wind-operated synthesizer known as an Electronic Valve Instrument into pensive, sometimes uneasy soundscapes. Pan-American is the name under which ex-Labradford singer and multi-

instrumentalist Mark Nelson has played electro-dub and atmospheric, brass-tinged instrumentals since 1997. Though he lives in Chicago, he can go years without performing here, and since he's just completed a solo tour of Europe playing all new, guitar-oriented material, even longtime fans can expect to hear something they've never heard before. Ex-Emeralds keyboardist Steve Hauschildt's latest album, *Disso!vi* (Ghostly International), adds streamlined beats and guest vocals to the gently bubbling synthetic textures of his solo records for Kranky. Windy & Carl have been around nearly as long as Kranky and have amassed a massive discography of melancholy songs and liquid instrumentals that includes five albums for the label. —**BILL MEYER**

BABY TEETH *The Claudettes* headline; *Baby Teeth and Young Heirlooms* open. 9 PM, *Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$15, \$12 in advance.* 21+

It's been more than five years since local indie-pop band Baby Teeth broke up due to bassist Jim Cooper (formerly of Detholz! and Frodus) relocating to Los Angeles. Their last show, which they dubbed "The Last Schmaltz," took place in July 2012, and with the exception of a one-off show in 2013, they've stuck by their self-imposed retirement. Lead singer and keyboardist Abraham Levitan has kept busy in the years since with projects such as Teletype, his duo with Chicago singer-songwriter Devin Davis, which released its full-length debut, *Spontaneity* (No Means No), in 2016. But in recent solo sets at the Hungry Brain, Levitan has been mixing some new songs in with Baby Teeth tunes. In an e-mail to me, he mentioned that he has been sharing recordings of these performances with the other members, and that they may transform some of this material into a new Baby Teeth record. Throughout the band's albums, they've amalgamated various elements from across the classic-rock genre, such as the wry songmanship of Warren Zevon and Harry Nilsson and the authentic quality and arena-worthy production of Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A.," so it'll be interesting to hear where they've found inspiration this time around. And while Baby Teeth's music is certainly pleasing, they shine even brighter in their lyrics, especially when depicting the humor and pain of aging. In "White Tonight," the title track of their 2012 record, the protagonist desperately tries to hold on to his waning social capital as a fading rock star, but he also finds comfort in a conventional lifestyle: he goes to bed early and spends his money on a couch instead of drugs. Getting old is a hard pill to swallow, but Baby Teeth make it all easier by depicting their subjects with kindness, affection, and respect. It's exciting to have the group back, especially with a few more years of life experience under their belts. —**ED BLAIR**

DOUBLE FERRARI *Lazer/Wulf* headline; *JOB, Double Ferrari, and William Covert* open. 9 PM, *Burlington, 3425 W. Fullerton, \$10 suggested donation.* 21+

Instrumental guitar rock does not need to brood. It does not need to swoosh, swirl, ache, or throb. It's not always Explosions in the Sky. Much like San Francisco's the Fucking Champs—who helped popularize an instrumental style of blazing riff-



Jessica Moss JOSEPH YARMUSH

rock within underground circles—Georgia four-piece Double Ferrari lean way (way) more metallic than mopey, with a triumphant style beholden to Iron Maiden. On their 2017 self-titled debut for the Ernest Jennings label, rhythms gallop like steeds cutting through the low-hanging fog of a Tolkien-esque battlefield while slicing guitar licks combine forces rather than duel, igniting each track in the same way the Power Sword transforms Prince Adam into He-Man. And make no bones about it, Double Ferrari often sound as decadent as their over-the-top, mutant name suggests. This is rock you'll bang your head to so much so that you'll get dizzy. —KEVIN WARWICK

FOREVER DEAF FEST See *Friday*. *The Atlas Moth* headline; *Without Waves*, *Huntsman*, *Varaha*, and *Meth*. open. 6:30 PM, *Beat Kitchen*, 2100 W. Belmont, \$25, \$35 two-night pass. 17+

RICHARD THOMPSON ELECTRIC TRIO See *Friday*. *Logan Ledger* opens. 8 PM, *Thalia Hall*, 1807 S. Allport. \$35-\$150. 17+

SUNDAY9

AALIYAH ALLAH *Lulu Be.* headlines; *Akenya*, *Aaliyah Allah*, and *Melissa Lozada-Oliva* open. 8 PM, *Schubas*, 3159 N. Southport, \$12, \$10 in advance. 18+

The publicly available catalog of Chicago R&B singer-songwriter Aaliyah Allah stretches back five years, to a song she recorded on GarageBand with just a USB mike; as she told *Circus* magazine in February, she didn't know how to mix music in those early days, but that tune, the dreamy, slow-motion "Infatuated," remains one of her favorites out of all the material she's created. "It is probably the most raw, organic song I'll ever be able to make," she said. Since "Infatuated," the 21-year-old has improved her mixing skills and kept the intense emotions of her early work intact. Her self-released 2017 EP, *Being*, is so gentle it sounds as though Allah was resting beneath a gravity blanket and in

MUSIC

the midst of drifting off to sleep when she recorded her vocals, though the crackling drum on the featherweight "Baby" and swaggering synth patterns on "Electric Lady" provide those tracks with centers of gravity. On her latest single, the languid "Stay," Allah uses a breathy vocal style to inject an uncomplicated, bluesy guitar line with woozy romanticism. —LEOR GALIL

MONDAY10

THE INTERNET See *Pick of the Week*, page 30. *Moonchild* opens. 7:30 PM, *House of Blues*, 329 N. Dearborn, sold out.

WEDNESDAY12

JESSICA MOSS *Brian Case and Black Duck* open. 8:30 PM, *Empty Bottle*, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

Best known for her work as part of Thee Silver Mt. Zion Memorial Orchestra's string section, Montreal-based violinist Jessica Moss stands beautifully on her own with her new solo LP, *Entanglement* (Constellation). Shedding the complex, overwhelmingly knotty arrangements of Silver Mt. Zion, the two pieces on *Entanglement* show how striking and powerful Moss can be when she's operating with as few components as possible. On the record's first side, the 22-minute track "Particles," Moss creates an all-encompassing, cinematic soundscape with only a processed and looped violin line and a little bit of vocal humming. The moving, dramatic swells of the song are a foil to the album's second side, the four-part "Fractals," which celebrates simplistic sparseness. A celebration of the beauty of minimalism, *Entanglement* proves that you can move listeners to a higher plane using only the bare essentials. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

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SUN
12/9

11AM - FREE
EUCHRE HANG
EMPTY BOTTLE BOOK CLUB DISCUSSES
"HER BODY AND OTHER PARTIES: STORIES"
BY CARMEN MARIA MACHADO
3PM - FREE

CORDOBA
BLACKER FACE • TAYLOR SEABERG

MON
12/10

FREE
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REUNION • WREATH OF HOGS

TUE
12/11

MODERN VICES
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WED
12/12

JESSICA MOSS
BRIAN CASE
BLACK DUCK (MACKAY/MCCOMBS/RUMBACK)

THU
12/13

JOLLYS
TUTU & THE PIRATES
WET WALLET

12/14: DEAD RIDER, 12/15: WINTER RECORD LABEL FAIR (12PM-FREE), 12/15: MANNEQUIN MEN, 12/16: CHICAGO HONKY TONK PRESENTS THE WESTERN ELSTONS (6PM-FREE), 12/16: ADRIAN YOUNGE & ALI SHAHEED MUHAMMAD AS THE MIDNIGHT HOUR, 12/17: ETHERS (FREE), 12/18: RUINS, 12/19: SEAN GREEN, 12/21: CONTAINER, 12/26: WONDER & SKEPTICISM (6PM-FREE), 12/27: LANDO CHILL, 12/28: RYLEY WALKER, 12/29: 14TH ANNUAL ALEX CHILTON BIRTHDAY BASH, 12/31: NYE WITH BULLY, 12/31 @ LOGAN SQUARE AUDITORIUM: WINDY CITY SOUL CLUB NYE 2018, 1/3: LOS BLACK DOGS, 1/5: T-REXTASY, 1/6: GOODGRANDKIDZ, 1/7: THE CURLS
NEW ON SALE: 12/29: ST. PÉ, 2/1: P.O.S., 2/2: MELKBELLY, 2/15: MILO (FINAL CHICAGO SHOW), 2/27: THE CHILLS, 3/7 @ THE ART INSTITUTE: BODY/HEAD, 3/28: VIAGRA BOYS, 4/26: TOKYO POLICE CLUB

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Publication Notice of Court Date for Request For Name Change: Request of: Anthoula Roberta Patelidas. There will be a court date on my request to change my name from: Anthoula Roberta Patelidas to Athoula Roberta Lagunas. The court date will be held 1/29/2018 at 1 PM at 50 W. Washington Chicago in Cook Country in courtroom #1704. (12/20)

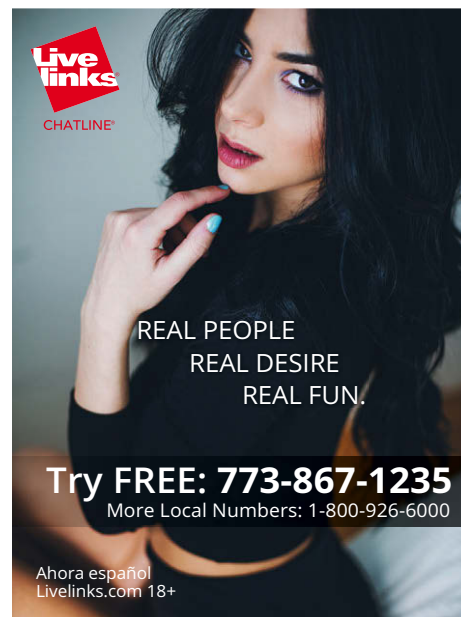


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Losing that cringey feeling and sex with male escorts

Advice for (mostly) straight men

Q: I'm a 59-year-old man in good health. For basically my whole adult life, I've had this problem during intercourse with a woman of (1) being very quick to come and (2) having a too intense "cringey" sensation when I come. This has led to often going soft at the prospect of intercourse. This too intense feeling makes me stop moving when I come, which is not satisfying at all. It doesn't happen with hand jobs or oral sex—they feel fine and good. Is this a known phenomenon? And, most importantly, what can I do to get to a point where I can enjoy intercourse? This seriously messes up my enjoyment of sex and my confidence with women. One time, and only one time (out of many with a particular girlfriend), I had intercourse and it felt fine when I came, still thrusting, so I know it's possible. I have been practicing with a Fleshlight, but it's still painfully "cringey" when I come. It is not fun and rather depressing.—**HE ALWAYS REALLY DREADS PENETRATION AND REGRETS THIS**

A: I shared your letter with Dr. Ashley Winter, a urologist in private practice in Portland, Oregon, and the cohost of *The Full Release*, a sex, health, and relationship podcast. Dr. Winter wanted to note that her comments are a general discussion of a medical topic

and NOT individual medical advice. She wanted me to emphasize this point—which she also emphasizes at the top of her terrific podcast—because Dr. Winter is a responsible doctor and not a card-carrying member of the Amalgamated Advice Columnists of America.

"There are three issues at play here," said Dr. Winter. "First, the pain or 'cringey' sensation only associated with vaginal and Fleshlight penetration. Second, being too quick to come. And third, erectile dysfunction. *HARDPART* insightfully suggests his ED may be related to his performance anxiety as well as anticipated pain, and I would agree with this. I would add that his quick ejaculation is most likely also caused by a mix of ED and pain—the body adapts to pain and erection loss by letting the swimmers off the hook early."

But why do you experience this pain only during penetrative sex? What is it about PIV (penis in vagina) or PIF (penis in Fleshlight) that causes those painfully cringey feelings?

"If he thrusts more during these activities than he does during oral or hand stimulation, I would expect that either pelvic floor muscle dysfunction or a nerve issue related to the lower spine could be causing the flares," said Dr. Winter. "If he were my patient, I would want to know if he has less pain when his partner is on top, which

would mean his pelvis is moving less. Also, does he have chronic low back pain? Bowel or bladder issues?"

Dr. Winter and I continued to generally discuss the medical topics raised by your question, *HARDPART*, and we generally discussed—this is not, again, individual medical advice, but a general discussion—two things someone with your particular issue might want to think about doing. First, a guy with your problem could try taking Viagra—or a related drug—while also using a penis-numbing spray. And a guy with your problem should also have his pelvic floor checked out. A urologist can help a guy with a problem like yours determine if there's something wrong with the complex web of muscles and nerves that crowd together around your junk and, if it is a pelvic floor issue, refer him to a pelvic floor physical therapist.

Finally, a suggestion from me, the person with the AACA card: A guy with a problem like yours—a guy whose dick works a certain way and has worked that way for decades—could save himself the hassle of physical therapy and the side effects of Viagra by accepting his dick and the way his dick works. There are women out there who prefer oral and outercourse to PIV, *HARDPART*, and you could bed those women with confidence.

Follow Dr. Winter on Twitter @AshleyGWinter, and check out *The Full Release* podcast, which she cohosts with comedian Mo Mandel, at thefullreleasepod.com.

Q: I'm a mostly straight guy in my 40s and I'm married to a woman. I don't know if it's a midlife crisis or what, but I've decided that I want to get fucked in the ass once in my life. I will be visiting Hamburg soon, and it's my understanding that sex work is legal in Germany. I want your help sorting out the legal, ethical, and practical issues.

1. Legal issue. Paying for sex in Germany is legal, right? But even if sex work is legal, that doesn't mean every sex worker is doing it voluntarily. I prefer people closer to my own age, and I imagine a 40-year-old sex worker is less likely to be exploited, right? What else can I do to ensure that I'm not with a trafficked individual?

2. Ethical issue. After many years and many near-divorce situations, my wife and I have adopted a more tolerant (or more apathetic) posture toward each other. She has on several occasions told me that she doesn't care who I fuck. While I haven't acted on it, she has said it often enough that I believe her. We've talked about an open relationship, but she wasn't enthusiastic. My best guess is that she doesn't want to know if I do anything "gay," while also not wanting me to form any emotional attachments. Do I ask her again if she really doesn't care who I fuck? Or do her previous statements suffice?

3. Practical issues. Is a condom enough protection? How do I avoid things like herpes and crabs? Other than emptying ye olde bowels, what other steps should I take before asking a male

German escort to fuck me in the ass? And how do I ask? Google Translate suggests "Fick mich in den Arsch," which is an unappealing thing to say. Maybe there's something sexier?—**LEGAL, ETHICAL, AND PRACTICAL**

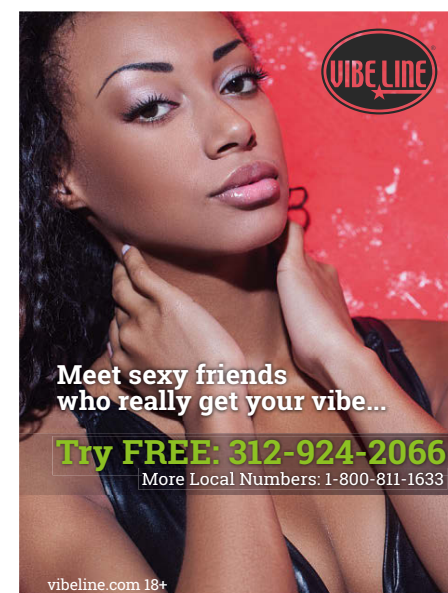
A: 1. Sex work is, indeed, legal in Germany. You can minimize your chances of hiring someone who may not be doing sex work of their own free will by avoiding agencies and finding yourself an independent escort. But seeing as how you're looking to hire a male in his 40s, LEAP, your odds of hiring someone doing sex work under duress are very low.

2. The wife who lovingly and apathetically tolerates your soon-to-be-fucked ass has already told you—and told you more than once—that she doesn't care who you fuck. She also doesn't want to know if you fuck someone else. Asking if she meant it immediately before flying off to Hamburg—double-checking to make sure she really doesn't care who you fuck—would basically mean telling her you know you're going to fuck someone else in Hamburg (and

fuck them all "gay" and shit), and she's already told you she doesn't want to know. Taking her at her word, i.e., allowing her previous statements to suffice, is the right thing to do.

3. A condom offers highly effective protection from HIV, gonorrhea, syphilis, and chlamydia. For added protection, LEAP, ask your doctor about getting on PrEP, aka Truvada, before your trip. It's a daily pill that, once built up to full strength (roughly a week), provides highly effective protection against HIV infection. While condoms do provide some protection against herpes, neither condoms nor PrEP will save you from crabs. To make sure your one-and-only ass fucking goes well, empty ye olde bowels and then douche ye olde rectum. Since most German escorts, like most German everybody's, speak English, LEAP, there is no need for an English-to-German dictionary. Just say, "Fuck my ass, please." **✂**

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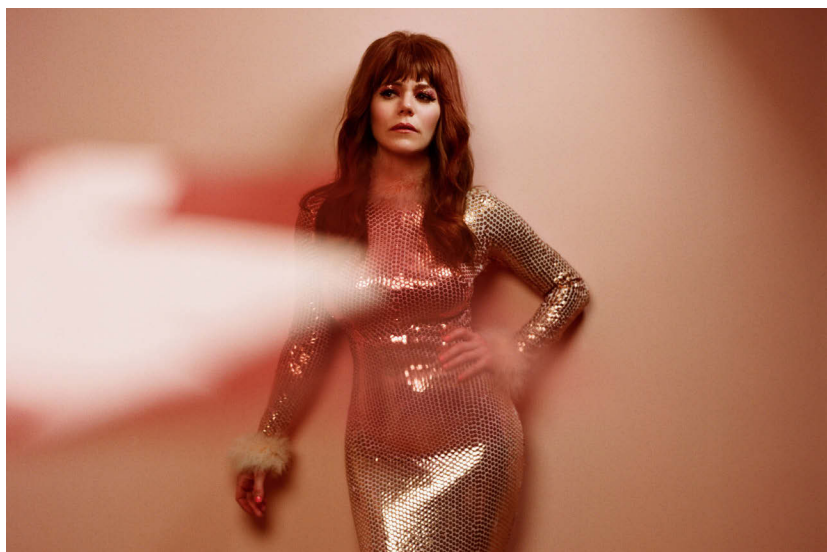
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Jenny Lewis  AUTUMN DEWILDE

NEW

Anderson .Paak 2/16, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
Avantasia 5/21, 8 PM, Patio Theater
Bad Boy Bill 1/19, 10 PM, the Mid
Basta 2/3, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
James Blake 3/3, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Break of Reality 4/16, 7 PM, Schubas 
Broods 4/10, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Cedric Burnside 2/8, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
Neko Case, Shannon Shaw 4/26-27, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
The Chills 2/27, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Dead & Company 6/14-15, 7 PM, Wrigley Field, on sale Sat 12/8, 10 AM
Deerhunter 2/17, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Mykele Deville 3/3, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Elder Island 3/19, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 12/7, 9 AM, 18+
Ezra Collective 3/17, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Dillon Francis, Allison Wonderland 2/2, 7:30 PM, Navy Pier, 18+
G-Herbo, City Girls, Jacquees, Summer Walker, Queen Key 12/28, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Gang of Four 2/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
Ghost Atlas, Landon Tewers 1/24, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Hand Habits 4/4, 9 PM, Hideout, on sale Fri 12/7, noon

Hatebreed, Obituary, Terror 4/11, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
High on Fire 1/22, 8 PM, Metro, 18+
Hootie & the Blowfish, Bare-naked Ladies 8/24, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM
Eilen Jewell 3/15, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/6, noon 
Judas Priest 5/25, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM
Kayzo 3/16, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
William Ryan Key 3/9, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen
La Santa Cecilia 4/5, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Last Bison 4/7, 7 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 12/7, noon, 17+
Le Butcherettes 2/20, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Jenny Lewis 3/30, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Lords of Acid, Orgy 3/7, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 17+
Los Walters 2/27, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 17+
Magic City Hippies 1/11, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Men I Trust 2/16, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Donna Missal 2/14, 7 PM, Chop Shop, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Alice Peacock SPACE, Evanston, 5/18, 8 PM, 
Pitchfork Midwinter with Slowdive, Kamasi Washington, Oneohtrix Point Never, Panda Bear, Mykki Blanco, and more 2/15-17, Art Institute of Chicago
P.O.S 2/1, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Queen & Adam Lambert 8/9, 8 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM
Rachael & Vilray 2/15, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
John Raymond & Real Feels 1/16, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Ike Reilly 12/27, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/7, 11 AM
RKCB, Shoffy 2/14, 7 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Todd Rundgren 4/23-24, 8 PM, Athenaeum Theatre, on sale Mon 12/10, 10 AM
Saint Pe 12/29, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Melvin Seals & JGB 3/22, 8 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Seven Lions 12/28, 9 PM, the Vic, 18+
Skela 2/16, 8 PM, Schubas 
Ski Mask the Slump God, Jid 12/22, 6 PM, Patio Theater 
Snarky Puppy 5/18, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Spiritualized 4/9, 8 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM, 18+
Spring Quartet 5/1, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/6, noon 
Lennon Stella 3/28, 7 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
Supersuckers 3/12, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM
Telekinesis, Sontalk 4/8, 8 PM, Schubas
Paul Thorn Band 5/2, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/7, 10 AM 
Tokyo Police Club 4/26, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Yung Gravy 2/21, 7:30 PM, Metro 

UPDATED

Robyn 3/6, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, moved from Riviera Theatre 

UPCOMING

Action Bronson, Meyhem Lauren 2/23, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
All Time Low 12/21, 7:30 PM, House of Blues 
Anika 1/22, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Beths 3/6, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Body/Head 3/7, 7:30 PM, Art Institute of Chicago
Boy Harsher 2/8, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Billy Bragg 4/25-27, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Cannibal Corpse, Morbid Angel, Necrot 3/4, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Cherish the Ladies 3/24, 3 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 
Cherry Glazerr 2/23, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Coone 12/13, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Corrosion of Conformity, Crowbar, Weedeater 2/9, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Dead Horses, Brother Brothers 2/1, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 
Direct Hit!, Copyrights 1/26, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Dream Theater 3/29, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Excision 3/30, 8 PM, Navy Pier, 18+
Fleetwood Mac 3/1, 8 PM, United Center
Flesh Eaters 3/10, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall
Gang of Youths, Gretta Ray 12/14, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Victor Goines & Kenny Washington 2/12, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston 
Ariana Grande 4/7, 7:30 PM, United Center
David Gray 6/13, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Half Alive 1/30, 7:30 PM, Schubas 
Hives, Refused 5/20, 7 PM, the Vic, 18+
Hypocrisy, Fleshgod Apocalypse 4/5, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Interpol 2/7, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Iron Maiden 8/22, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park
Wanda Jackson 3/14, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston 
Joe Jackson 2/21-22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Jerusalem in My Heart 3/26, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Durand Jones & the Indications 4/11, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

ALL ALL AGES FREE

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Kiss 3/2, 7:30 PM, United Center
John Legend 12/13, 7 PM, Lyric Opera House
Lotus 12/30-31, 9 PM, Park West, 18+
Nick Lowe with Los Strait-jackets 12/31, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston 
Jeff Lynne's ELO 6/27, 8 PM, United Center
Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets 4/4, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Massive Attack 3/23, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Mineral, Tancred 1/24, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall
Misfits, Fear, Venom Inc. 4/27, 7:30 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Kacey Musgraves 1/31, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Tom Odell 4/30, 7:30 PM, Thalia Hall 
Perfume 4/5, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Procol Harum 2/20-21, 8 PM, City Winery 
Quinn XCII 3/20, 6 PM, Riviera Theatre 
Rolling Stones 6/21, 7:30 PM, Soldier Field
Royal Trux 2/22, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Snail Mail 1/17, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Suicide Machines, Goddamn Gallows 12/28, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Tender 3/14, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Tourist 2/21, 8 PM, Sleeping Village
Twiddle 2/8, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Carrie Underwood 10/29, 7 PM, United Center
Kurt Vile & the Violators 12/22, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Ryley Walker 12/28, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
William Elliott Whitmore 12/13, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Webb Wilder & the Beatnecks 12/29, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Anita Wilson 2/10, 7 PM, City Winery 
Chely Wright 1/27, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston 
Ry X 3/26, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Yuri & Pandora 3/16, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont
Thalia Zedek 12/13, 9 PM, Hideout
Zeke Beats 1/12, 8 PM, Subterranean, 18+
Zomboy 2/8, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+ 



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

LOCAL ROOTS-REGGAE five-piece **Akasha** expertly blend heavy dub grooves and the creamy vocals of singer **Cosmos Ray**. Their new album, ***Mother of Exiles***, drops on Friday, December 7, on long-running Jamaican-inspired label **Jump Up Records**, and it features their most stridently political material yet. According to Ray, the album “addresses complex issues such as immigration, discrimination, and oppression, but with an approach infused by love, service, and unity.” On Thursday, December 6, Akasha celebrate with a free live set at the **Whistler** as part of the **Summer Down Sound** reggae party, which also includes DJs the Graduate, Rad Brian, Marcuslyah, and King Tony.

Last week, **David Beltran** and **Diana Bowden**, the guiding forces of local label and multimedia collective **FeelTrip**, launched an Indiegogo campaign for their record store in progress, **No Requests**. They’ve been working to open the Avondale shop since September, and unforeseen overhead costs have pushed back the opening date. They hope to raise \$10,000 by 2019, and they’re offering great perks to donors. (For details, visit bit.ly/no_requests.) On Sunday, December 9, FeelTrip will be among the local labels selling swag at the **Slippery Slope** during **Not Normal Tapes’** tenth-anniversary pop-up shop and show; CB Radio Gorgeous, Molcajete, and Roy Kinsey perform.

Experimental R&B duo **The-Drum** returned from hiatus with a rad new LP in July, and last week half the group, producer **Jeremiah Meece**, dropped the solo EP ***Inspiration*** via California dance label **Knightwerk**. Meece says the EP mixes old and new material—among the latter is the title track, a “stream-of-consciousness jam about the malaise of existence in the current climate,” which could pass for Max Headroom fronting LaTour on a sequel to “People Are Still Having Sex.” Not a complaint! Meece maintains monthly DJ residencies at Danny’s Tavern and Punch House. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

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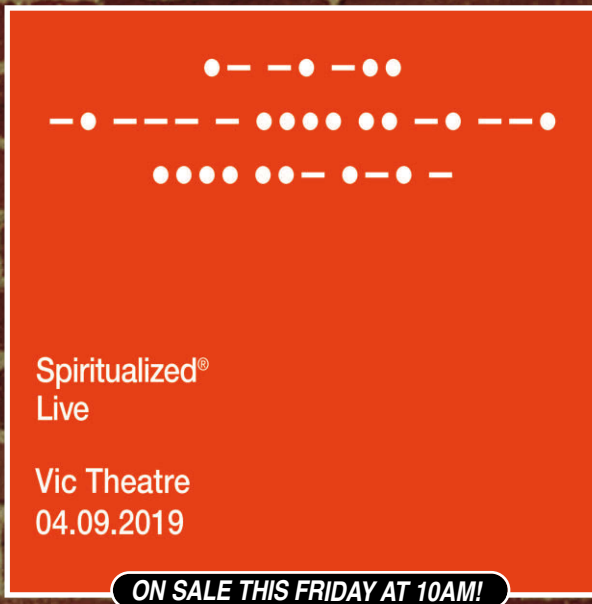


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